

School of Theology at Claremont



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# RELIGIOUS LIFE

SAPIR   ▲   MATHEWS  
TITTLE   ▲   JONES  
M<sup>c</sup> CONNELL



MAN AND  
HIS WORLD  
VOLUME ELEVEN



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# RELIGIOUS LIFE





# **MAN AND HIS WORLD**

**Northwestern University Essays in Contemporary Thought**

**Edited by**

**BAKER BROWNELL**

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Volume I

**A PREFACE TO THE UNIVERSE**

Volume II

**THE WORLD MECHANISM**

Volume III

**MIND AND BEHAVIOR**

Volume IV

**MAKING MANKIND**

Volume V

**SOCIETY TODAY**

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**ART AND THE WORTH WHILE**

Volume X

**FIVE ARTS**

Volume XI

**RELIGIOUS LIFE**

Volume XII

**THE WORLD MAN LIVES IN**

**DECORATIONS BY ERVINE METZL**

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**RELIGIOUS LIFE**

BY

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**SHAILER MATHEWS**

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**RUFUS M. JONES**

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**FRANCIS J. McCONNELL**

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**MAN AND HIS WORLD**

VOLUME ELEVEN

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## RELIGIOUS LIFE







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**M**AN makes his own eternities out of his deep need, but the long effort down the course of human thinking to prove them and to explicate their mystery is a brave failure that will always change and shift in character as the times move on. Theologies and churches and apt apologies for God will break, no doubt, and disappear and rise again in ever new mutations as society evolves, and the gods themselves of modern times will fall; but man will build his worlds of spirit as long as he survives; he will seek being, and always lay upon the many things around him the life that he finds within. His will to eternity will endure, though gods may change and doctrines and authorities break down. His quest for eras beyond the fields of time always will go on.

Man learns to live in the thin stratum of time and space as his maturity increases; and the technique of his senses and objective observation has improved. He can extract a "fact" cleanly from the dim matrix and foundation of reality, and the plural-

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ities of things and many motions around him are made articulate and given scientific form. He has learned obedience to the dogma of the senses, and he knows how to purify his observations and abstract them from the rest of being. He names it "scientific method," in its more delicate extensions, and the "objective world" is its great consequence. It is a partial world abstracted from the whole of being. It is "external," forever fixed in its authority, and it allows no changing of its detail nor creation by the human spirit. Man must be receptive towards sense data.

But space and time are not enough to house man's spirit; and the half world that he finds there, its pluralities and diverse data, cannot assure him the eternities that he always will demand. He will try always to defeat the dualism of his maturing world. He will demand a pristine wholeness of his being, beyond the specialties and definitions of a time and space and diversity of motions.

He will create his gods, for in creation he will find an avenue to being that the senses and objective data never can reveal. They are blown sands before his spirit that he must penetrate, and the wind of them may blind him with the dust. He will make finality, for in making he will identify himself with being in a way that experiences of the receptive kind cannot bring about. They retard the spirit under dust and

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a débris of many things, for the world of spirit lies not in observation or in rational analysis, but in creative being.

But the critic of the gods and of religion, like the critic of the arts, still is important. He may not find God through critical analysis — he may not transmute the wordless ore of being into words and articulate expressions; but he may try to correlate religious life with other things — he may try to fit the precious stone into a setting of affairs — and that will always be of value more for the trying than the finality of result. By reason, or by conduct, or social institution, he may try to adjust his world to religious value and live over indirectly in the effort the immediate reality within. Theologies and churches, moral codes and institutions, are expressive efforts — so far as they escape the scientific and the practical — and therein they are less religious than artistic. They are the arts of religion, but religion lies beyond them and within.

Religions, says Edward Sapir, may be evangelistic or ritualistic: the one is individual, and aims at the impulsive conquest of reality, the other is social and finds, in a fixed fabric of routine, stability and a spiritual peace. The one is inner light, the other is externally expressed. Between art and religion, Doctor Sapir says, the difference is between the manifest and the inexpressible. Art creates a feeling of whole-

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ness and precipitates the flux of things into tangible forms beautiful and sufficient to themselves. Religion gathers up all the threads and intimations of life into a wholeness that is not manifest and can only be experienced in the form of passionate desire.

Where religion, in Doctor Sapir's view, is a personal adjustment and serenity against a universal background of the unexpected and the unknown, religion for E. F. Tittle is also personal and spiritual, but more amenable to expression in human conduct, and the moral order, and in love and justice to mankind. The one is personal and poetic, the other is personal and moral; and the latter frankly justifies religion on man's need for a basis of moral distinction and authority. "It is better to feed a hungry man than to see even such visions as St. Paul saw," Meister Eckhart once said. It is a pragmatic test.

For Rufus Jones, religion is mystical, in the better and more accurate sense of that misused term, for his attention is less on personality than on being. He is a realist, as mystics finally are, and he reaches on through personality and experience and beyond them to independent spiritual being. "Man is more than himself," he says; "he reaches out." "The beyond is within us." "The real world is close to our being: the world of things, on the other hand, introduces

space and separation." They are profound and simple reachings for the wordless being of the world.

In sharp contrast is the view of Shailer Mathews on religion. For his approach is historical and social, and he is careful to involve religion fundamentally in social and scientific categories of the age. "Religion," he says cogently, "is an attempt to establish a help-gaining relationship with those elements of the environment which have resulted in the evolution of man's personal powers." It stands for an attempt on the part of man, he adds, to treat the mysterious forces at whose mercy he finds himself in the same way that he would treat social superiors. It is rationalized action seeking help through personal relations. And simple and common sense as his thesis is, it is harder to prove — because it remains in the field of reason and of proof — than other less socialized interpretations.

But faith has its irreducible place even in the very texture of a fact, Bishop McConnell shows logically, and facts are discovered through social expectations and judged by social pronouncement. In all knowledge faith is involved, and in all fact there must be assumption. Facts are, after all, but approximations, and their category is but a mode of working on the world. From the dark and seething magma of all being they may emerge for a clear moment like crystals that take form upon a molten surface and then

dissolve again into the general heat and restlessness of things. Facts come and go, and there is never rest.

And religion belongs to all of these. They are lights upon it from as many different stations, but what religion is today or yesterday or tomorrow always will be wordless and unsaid. — B. B.



RELIGIONS AND  
RELIGIOUS  
PHENOMENA

Edward Sapir





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A VERY useful distinction can be made between "a religious" and "religion." The former appears only in a highly developed society in which religious behavior has been organized by tradition; the latter is universal. The ordinary conception of a religion includes the notions of a self-conscious "church," of religious officers whose functions are clearly defined by custom and who typically engage in no other type of economic activity, and of carefully guarded rituals that are the symbolic expression of the life of the "church." Generally, too, such a religion is invested with a certain authority by a canonical tradition that has grown up around a body of sacred texts, supposed to have been revealed by God or to have been faithfully set down by the founder of the religion or by followers of his who have heard the sacred words from his own lips.

If we leave the more sophisticated peoples and study the social habits of primitive and barbaric folk, we shall find that it is very difficult to discover re-

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ligious institutions that are as highly formalized as those that go under the name of the Roman Catholic Church or of Judaism. Yet religion in some sense is everywhere present. It seems to be as universal as speech itself and the use of material tools. It is difficult to apply a single one of the criteria that are ordinarily used to define a religion to the religious behavior of primitive peoples; yet neither the absence of specific religious officers, nor the lack of authoritative texts, nor any other conventional lack can seriously mislead the student into denying them true religion. Ethnologists are unanimous in ascribing religious behavior to the very simplest of known societies. So much of a commonplace, indeed, is this assumption of the presence of religion in every known community—barring none, not even those that flaunt the banner of atheism—that one needs to reaffirm and justify the assumption.

How are we to define religion? Can we get behind priests and prayers and gods and rituals, and discover a formula that is not too broad to be meaningless, nor so specific as to raise futile questions of exclusion or inclusion? I believe it is possible to do this, if we ignore for a moment the special forms of behavior deemed religious, and attend to the essential meaning and function of such behavior. "Religion" is precisely one of those words that belong

to the more intuitive portion of our vocabulary. We can often apply it safely and unexpectedly without the slightest concern for whether the individual or group termed religious is priest-ridden or not, is addicted to prayer or not, believes or does not believe in a God. Almost unconsciously the term "religion" has come to have for most of us a certain connotation of personality. Some individuals are religious and others are not, and all societies have religion in the sense that they provide the naturally religious person with certain ready made symbols for the exercise of his religious need. The formula that we would venture to suggest is simply this: Religion is man's never-ceasing attempt to discover a road to spiritual serenity across the perplexities and dangers of daily life. How this serenity is obtained is a matter of infinitely varied detail. Where the need for such serenity is passionately felt, we have religious yearning; where it is absent, religious behavior is no more than socially sanctioned form or an æsthetic blend of belief and gesture, but religion itself must be denied outright. In practice it is all but impossible to disconnect religious sentiment from formal religious conduct; but it is worth divorcing these two, in order that we may insist all the more clearly on the reality of the sentiment.

What constitutes "spiritual serenity" must be answered afresh for every culture and for every

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community — at last analysis, for every individual. Culture defines for every society the world in which it lives; hence we can expect no more of any religion than that it awaken and overcome the feeling of danger, of individual helplessness, that is proper to that particular world. The ultimate problems of an Ojibwa Indian are different as to content from those of the educated devotee of modern science; but with each of these human beings religion means the haunting realization of ultimate powerlessness in an inscrutable world, and the unquestioning and thoroughly irrational conviction of the possibility of gaining mystic security by somehow identifying oneself with what can never be known. Religion is omnipresent fear and a vast humility paradoxically turned into bedrock security, for once the fear is imaginatively taken to one's heart and the humility confessed for good and all, the triumph of human consciousness is assured. There can be neither fear nor humiliation for deeply religious natures, for they have intuitively experienced both these emotions in advance of the declared hostility of an overwhelming world, coldly indifferent to human desire.

Religion of such purity as we have defined it is hard to discover. That does not matter; it is the pursuit, conscious or unconscious, of ultimate serenity following total and necessary defeat that constitutes

the core of religion. It has often allied itself with art and science, and art at least has gained from the alliance, but in crucial situations religion has always shown itself indifferent to both. Religion seeks neither the objective enlightenment of science nor the strange equilibrium, the sensuous harmony, of æsthetic experience. It aims at nothing more nor less than the impulsive conquest of reality, and can use science and art as little more than stepping stones toward the attainment of its own serenity. The mind that is intellectualist through and through is necessarily baffled by religion, and in its attempt to explain it makes little more of it than a blind and chaotic science.

Whether or not the spirit of religion is reconcilable with that of art does not concern us. Human nature is infinitely complex, and every type of reconciliation of opposites seems possible, but we must insist that the nucleus of religious feeling is by no means identical with æsthetic emotion. The serenity of art seems of an utterly different nature from that of religion. Art creates a feeling of wholeness precipitating the flux of things into tangible forms, beautiful and sufficient to themselves; religion gathers up

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all the threads and meaninglessnesses of life into a wholeness that is not manifest and can only be experienced in the form of a passionate desire. It is not useful, and it is perhaps not wise, to insist on fundamental antinomies. But if one were pressed to the wall, one might perhaps be far from wrong in suspecting that the religious spirit is antithetical to that of art; for religion is essentially ultimate and irreconcilable. Art forgives because it values as an ultimate good the here and now; religion forgives because the here and now are somehow irrelevant to a desire that drives for ultimate solutions.

Religion does not presuppose a definite belief in God or in a number of gods or spirits, though in practice such beliefs are generally the rationalized background for religious behavior. Belief, as a matter of fact, is not a properly religious concept at all, but a scientific one. The sum total of one's beliefs may be said to constitute one's science. Some of these beliefs can be sustained by an appeal to direct personal experience; others rest for their warrant on the authority of society or on the authority of such individuals as are known or believed to hold in their hands the keys of final demonstration. So far as the normal individual is concerned, a belief in the reality of molecules or atoms is of exactly the same nature as a belief in God or immortality. The true division

here is not between science and religious belief, but between personally verifiable and personally unverifiable belief. A philosophy of life is not religion if the phrase connotes merely a cluster of rationalized beliefs. Only when one's philosophy of life is vitalized by emotion does it take on the character of religion.

Some writers have spoken of a specifically religious emotion, but it seems quite unnecessary to appeal to any such hypothetical concept. One may rest content to see in "religious emotion" nothing more nor less than a cluster of such typical emotional experiences as fear, awe, hope, love, the pleading attitude, and any others that may be experienced, in so far as these psychological experiences occur in a context of ultimate values. Fear, as such, no matter how poignant or ecstatic, is not religion. A calm belief in a God who creates and rewards and punishes does not constitute religion if the believer fails to recognize the necessity of the application of this belief to his personal problems. Only when the emotion of fear and the belief in a God are somehow integrated into a value, can either the emotion or the belief be said to be of a religious nature. The standpoint that we take allows for no specific religious emotions, nor does it recognize any specific forms of belief as necessary for religion. All that we ask is that intensity of feeling join with a philosophy of



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ultimate things into an unanalyzed conviction of the possibility of security in a world of values.

We can distinguish, in theory if not in practice, between individual religious experience and socialized religious behavior. Some writers on religion put the emphasis on the reality and intensity of the individual religious experience, others prefer to see in religion a purely social pattern, an institution, on which the individual must draw, in order to have religious experience at all. The contrast between these two points of view is probably more apparent than real. The suggestions for religious behavior will always be found to be of social origin; it is the validation of this behavior in individual or in social terms that may be thought to vary. This is equivalent to saying that some societies tend to seek the most intense expression of religious experience in individual behavior (including introspection under that term), while other societies tend toward a collective orthodoxy, reaching an equivalent intensity of life in forms of behavior in which the individual is subordinated to a collective symbol. Religions that conform to the first tendency may be called "evangelistic"; religions of the second type are "ritualistic."



The contrast invites criticism, as everyone who has handled religious data knows. One may object that it is precisely under the stimulation of collective activity, as in the sun dance of the Plains Indians or in the Roman Catholic Mass, that the most intense forms of individual experience are created. Again, one may see in the most lonely and self-centered of religious practices — say, the mystic ecstasies of a saint or the private prayer of one lost to society — little more than the religious behavior of society itself, disconnected, for the moment, from the visible “church.” A theorist like Durkheim sees the “church” implicit in every prayer or act of ascetic piety. It is doubtful if the mere observation of religious behavior quite justifies the distinction that we have made. A finer psychological analysis would probably show that the distinction is none the less valid — that societies differ, or tend to differ, according to whether they find the last court of appeal in matters religious in the social act or in the private emotional experience.

Let one example do for many. The religion of the Plains Indians of North America is different in many of its details from that of the Pueblo Indians of the Southwest. Nevertheless there are many external resemblances between them, such as the use of shrines with fetishistic objects gathered in them, the color symbolism of cardinal points, and the religious

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efficacy of communal dancing. It is not these and a host of other resemblances, however, that impress the student of native American religion; it is rather their profound psychological difference. Plains Indian religion is full of collective symbols; indeed, a typical ethnological account of the religion of a Plains tribe seems to be little more than a list of social stereotypes — dances and regalia and taboos and conventional religious tokens. The sun dance is an exceedingly elaborate ritual, which lasts many days, and in which each song and each step in the progress of the ceremonies is a social expression. For all that, the final validation of the sun dance, as of every other form of Plains religion, seems to rest with the individual in his introspective loneliness. The nuclear idea in Plains religion is the "blessing" or "manitou" experience, in which the individual puts himself in a relation of extreme intimacy with the world of supernatural power or "medicine."

Completely socialized rituals are not the primary fact in the structure of Plains religion: they are rather an extended form of the nuclear individual experience. The recipient of a blessing may and does invite others to participate in the private ritual that has grown up around the vision in which power and security have been vouchsafed to him; he may even transfer his interest in the vision to another individual. In course of time, the original ritual, compli-

cated by many accretions, may become a communal form, in which the whole tribe has the most lively and anxious interest, as is the case with the beaver bundle or medicine pipe ceremonies of the Blackfoot Indians. A non-religious individual may see little but show and outward circumstance in all this business of vision and "bundle" and ritual, but the religious consciousness of the Plains Indians never seems to lose sight of the inherently individual warrant of the vision and of all rituals which may eventually flow from it. It is highly significant that even in the sun dance, which is probably the least individualized kind of religious conduct among these Indians, the high water mark of religious intensity is felt to reside not in any collective ecstasy, but in the individual emotions of those who gaze at the center pole of the sun dance lodge, and, still more, of the resolute few who are willing to experience the unspeakably painful ecstasy of self-torture.

Pueblo religion seems to offer very much of a contrast to the religion of the Plains. Pueblo religion is ritualized to an incredible degree. Ceremony follows relentlessly on ceremony, clan and religious fraternity go through their stately symbolism of dance and prayer and shrine construction with the regularity of the seasons. All is anxious care for the norm and detail of ritual. But it is not the mere bulk of this ritualism that truly characterizes the religion

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of the Hopi or Zuñi. It is the depersonalized, almost cosmic, quality of the rituals, which have all the air of preordained things of nature that the individual is helpless either to assist or to thwart, and whose mystic intention he can only comprehend by resigning himself to the traditions of his tribe and clan and fraternity. No private intensity of religious experience will help the ritual. Whether the dancer is aroused to a strange ecstasy or remains as cold as an automaton, is a matter of perfect indifference to the Pueblo consciousness. All taint of the orgiastic is repudiated by the Pueblo Indian, who is content with the calm constraint and power of things ordained, seeing in himself no discoverer of religious virtue, but only a correct and measured transmitter of things perfect in themselves. One might teach Protestant revivalism to a Blackfoot or a Sioux; a Zuñi would smile uncomprehendingly.

Though religion cannot be defined in terms of belief, it is none the less true that the religions of primitive peoples tend to cluster around a number of typical beliefs or classes of belief. It will be quite impossible for us to give even a superficial account of the many types of religious belief that have been

reported for primitive man, and we shall therefore content ourselves with a brief mention of three of them: belief in spirits (animism), belief in gods, and belief in cosmic power (mana).

That primitive peoples are animistic — in other words, that they believe in the existence in the world and in themselves of a vast number of immaterial and potent essences — is a commonplace of anthropology. Tylor attempted to derive all forms of religious behavior from animistic beliefs; and while we can no longer attach as great an importance to animism as did Tylor and others of the classical anthropologists, it is still correct to say that few primitive religions do not at some point or other connect with the doctrine of spirits. Most peoples believe in a soul that animates the human body; some believe in a variety of souls (as when the principle of life is distinguished from what the psychologists would call “consciousness,” or the psyche); and most peoples also believe in the survival of the soul after death in the form of a ghost. The experiences of the soul or souls typically account for such phenomena as dreams, illness, and death. Frequently one or other type of soul is identified with such insubstantial things as the breath, or the shadow cast by a living being, or, more materially, with such parts of the human body as the heart or diaphragm; sometimes, too, the soul is symbolized by an imaginary be-

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ing, such as a mannikin, who may leave the body and set out in pursuit of another soul. The mobile soul and the ghost tend to be identified, but this is not necessarily the case.

In all this variety of primitive belief we see little more than the dawn of psychology. The religious attitude enters in only when the soul or ghost is somehow connected with the great world of non-human spirits that animates the whole of nature, and which is possessed with a power for good or ill that it is the constant aim of human beings to capture for their own purposes. These "spirits," which range all the way from disembodied human souls, through animals, to godlike creatures, are perhaps more often feared than directly worshipped. On the whole, it is perhaps correct to say that spirits touch humanity through the individual rather than through the group, and that access is gained to them rather through the private, selfish ritual of magic than through religion. All such generalizations, however, are exceedingly dangerous. Almost any association of beliefs and attitudes is possible.

Tylor believed that the series, "soul, ghost, spirit, god," was a necessary genetic chain. "God" would be no more than the individualized totality of all spirits, localized in earth or air or sea, and specialized as to function or kind of power. The single "god" of a polytheistic pantheon would be the

transition stage between the unindividualized spirit and the Supreme Being of the great historical religions. These simple and plausible connections are no longer lightly taken for granted by the anthropologists. There is a great deal of disturbing evidence which seems to show that the idea of a god, or of God, is not necessarily to be considered as the result of an evolution of the idea of soul or spirit. It would seem that some of the most primitive peoples we know of have arrived at the notion of an all-powerful being who stands quite outside the world of spirits and who tends to be identified with such cosmic objects as the sun or the sky. The Nootka Indians of British Columbia, for instance, believe in the existence of a Supreme Being, whom they identify with daylight, and who is sharply contrasted both with the horde of mysterious beings ("spirits") from whom they seek power for special ends, and with the mythological beings of legend and ritual. Some form of primitive monotheism not infrequently co-exists with animism. Polytheism is not necessarily the forerunner of monotheism, but may, for certain cultures, be looked upon as a complex, systematized product of several regional ideas of God.

The idea of "mana," or diffused, non-individualized power, seems to be exceedingly widespread among primitive peoples. The term has been borrowed from Melanesia, but it is as applicable to the



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Algonkian, Iroquois, Siouan, and numerous other tribes of aboriginal America, as to the Melanesians and Polynesians. The whole world is believed to be pervaded by a mysterious potency that may be concentrated in particular objects, or, in many cases, possessed by spirits or animals or gods. Man needs to capture some of this power in order to attain his desires. He is ever on the lookout for blessings from the unknown, which may be vouchsafed to him in unusual or uncanny experiences, in visions, and in dreams. The notion of immaterial power often takes curious forms. Thus the Hupa Indians of north-western California believe in the presence of radiations that stream to earth from mysterious realms beyond, inhabited by a supernatural and holy folk who once lived upon our earth but vanished with the coming of the Indians. These radiations may give the medicine woman her power, or they may inspire one with the spirit of a ritual.

We can hardly do more than mention some of the typical forms of religious behavior, as distinguished from belief, which are of universal distribution. Prayer is common, but it is only in the higher reaches of culture that it attains its typically pure and al-



truistic form. On lower levels it tends to be limited to the voicing of selfish wants, which may even bring harm to those who are not members of one's own household. It is significant that prayers are frequently addressed to specific beings who may grant power or withhold ill, rather than to the Supreme Being, even when such a being is believed to exist.

A second type of religious behavior is the pursuit of power, or "medicine." The forms which this pursuit takes are exceedingly varied. The individual "medicine" experience is perhaps illustrated in its greatest purity among the American aborigines; but it is, of course, plentifully illustrated in other parts of the world. Among some tribes the receipt of power, which generally takes place in the form of a dream or vision, establishes a very personal relation between the giver of the blessing and the suppliant. This relation is frequently known as "individual totemism." The term "totemism," indeed, is derived from the Ojibwa Indians, among whom there is a tendency for the individual to be "blessed" by the same supernatural being as had already blessed his paternal ancestors. Such an example as this shows how the purely individual relation may gradually become socialized into the institution typically known as "totemism," which may be defined as a specific relation, manifested in a great variety of ways, which exists between a clan or other social group and a

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supernatural being, generally, but by no means exclusively, identified with an animal. In spite of the somewhat shadowy borderland that connects individual totemism with group totemism, it is inadvisable to think of the one institution as necessarily derived from the other, though the possibility of such a development need not be denied outright.

3. Closely connected with the pursuit of power is the handling of magical objects, or assemblages of such objects, which contain or symbolize the power that has been bestowed. Among some of the North American Indian tribes, as we have seen, the "medicine bundle," with its associated ritual and taboos, owes its potency entirely to the supernatural experience that lies back of it. Classical fetishism, however, such as we find in West Africa, seems not to be based necessarily on an individual vision. A fetish is an object that possesses power in its own right, and which may be used to effect desired ends by appropriate handling, prayer, or other means. In many cases a supernatural being is believed to be actually resident in the fetish, though this conception, which most nearly corresponds to the popular notion of "idol," is probably not as common as might be expected. The main religious significance of medicine bundles, fetishes, and other tokens of the supernatural, is the reassuring power exerted on the primitive mind by a concrete symbol that is felt to be

closely connected with the mysterious unknown and its limitless power. It is, of course, the persistence of the suggestibility of visual symbols that makes even the highest forms of religion tend to cluster about such objects as temples, churches, shrines, crucifixes, and the like.

The fourth and perhaps the most important of the forms of religious behavior is the carrying out of rituals. Rituals are typically symbolic actions that belong to the whole community; but among primitive peoples there is a tendency for many rituals to be looked upon as the special function of a limited group within the whole tribe. Sometimes this group is a clan, or gens, or other division not based on religious concepts; at other times the group is a religious fraternity, a brotherhood of priests, which exists for the sole purpose of seeing to the correct performance of rituals that are believed to be of the utmost consequence for the safety of the tribe as a whole. It is difficult to generalize about primitive ritual, so varied are the forms which it assumes. Nearly everywhere the communal ritual whips the whole tribe into a state of great emotional tension, which is interpreted by the folk as a visitation from the supernatural world. The most powerful means known to bring about this feeling is the dance, which is nearly always accompanied by singing. Some ethnologists have seen in primitive ritual little more than the

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counterpart of our own dramatic and pantomimic performances. Historically there is undoubtedly much truth in this, but it would be very misleading to make of a psychology of primitive ritual a mere chapter in the psychology of æsthetic experience. The exaltation of the Sioux sun dancer or of a Northwest Coast Indian who impersonates the cannibal spirit is a very different thing from the excitement of the performing artist. It seems very much more akin to the intense reverie of the mystic or ascetic. Externally, the ritual may be described as a sacred drama; subjectively, the ritual may bring the participant to a realization of mystery and power, for which the fetish or other religious object is but an external token. The psychological interpretation of ritual naturally differs with the temperament of the individual.

The sharp distinction between religious and other modes of conduct to which we are accustomed in modern life is by no means possible on more primitive levels. Religion is neither ethics nor science nor art, but it tends to be inextricably bound up with all three of these. It also manifests itself in the social organization of the tribe, in ideas of higher or lower status, in the very form and technique of government itself. It is sometimes said that it is impossible to disentangle religious behavior, among primitive peoples, from the setting in which it is found. For

many primitives, however, it seems almost more correct to say that religion is the one structural reality in the whole of their culture, and that what we call art and ethics and science and social organization are hardly more than the application of the religious point of view to the functions of daily life.

In concluding, attention may be called to the wide distribution of certain sentiments or feelings that are of a peculiarly religious nature and which tend to persist even among the most sophisticated individuals, long after they have ceased to believe in the rationalized justification for these sentiments and feelings. They are by no means to be identified with simple emotions, though they obviously feed on the soil of all emotions. A religious sentiment is typically unconscious, intense, and bound up with a compulsive sense of values. It is possible that modern psychology can analyze them all away as socialized "compulsion neuroses," but it is exceedingly doubtful if a healthy social life or a significant individual life is possible without these very sentiments. We would mention as the first and most important of them a feeling of community with a necessary universe of values. In psychological terms this feeling

seems to be a blend of complete humility and a no less complete security. It is only when this fundamental serenity is as intense as fear and as necessary as any of the simpler sentiments that its possessor can be properly termed a "mystic."

2. A second sentiment, which often grows out of the first, is a feeling for sacredness, or holiness, or divinity. That certain experiences, or ideas, or objects, or personalities must be "set apart" as symbols of ultimate value, is an idea that is repellent to the critical modern mind. It is none the less a necessary sentiment to many, perhaps to most, human beings. The consciously justified infraction of sentiments of holiness, which cannot be recognized by the thinking mind, leads frequently to an inexplicable personal unhappiness.

3. The taboos of primitive peoples strike us as very bizarre, and it is a commonplace of psychoanalysis that many of them have a strange kinship with the apparently self-imposed taboos of neurotics. It is doubtful if many psychologists or students of culture realize the psychological significance of taboo, which seems nothing more nor less than an unconscious striving for the strength that comes from any form of sacrifice or deferment of immediate fulfillments. Certainly all religions have insisted on the importance of both taboo — in its narrower sense of specific interdiction — and sacrifice. It may be

that the feeling of the necessity of sacrifice is no more than a translation into action of the sentiment of the holy.

Perhaps the most difficult of the religious sentiments to understand is that of sin, which is almost 4.  
amusingly abhorrent to the modern mind. Every constellation of sentiments holds within itself its own opposites. The more intense a sentiment, the more certain is the potential presence of a feeling that results from the flouting or thwarting of it. The price for the reality and intensity of the positive sentiments that we have mentioned, any or all of which must of necessity be frequently violated in the course of daily life, is the sentiment of sin, which is a necessary shadow cast by all sincerely religious feeling. It is, of course, no accident that religion in its most authentic moments has always been prepared to cancel a factual shortcoming in conduct, if only it could assure itself that this shortcoming was accompanied by a lively sense of sin. Good works are not the equivalent of the sentiment of ultimate value which religion insists upon. The shadow cast by this sentiment, which is a sense of sin, may be intuitively felt as of more reassuring value than a benevolence which proceeds from mere social habit or from personal indifference. Religion has always been the en- x  
emy of self-satisfaction.







THE RELIGIOUS  
LIFE

Shailer Mathews



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**T**HE word religion is sometimes used as if it stood for an entity. It is therefore subject to scholastic rather than scientific discussion. By more or less inaccurate generalization, one organizes an idea and then proceeds to question its validity. Naturally the description and analogy are apt to do service for a definition.

Instead of beginning with a definition that subtly commits one to the use of an abstract term, one should begin with the observation of human behavior. Dependent upon natural forces, needing food and protection, seeking joy and peace, men have everywhere sought the attainment of these ends by some sort of relationship with the universe in the midst of which they live. Their efforts have been of two general sorts. On the one hand, there has been

the attempt to treat these forces in the same way in which men treat men, that is, socially; and on the other hand, to treat them without the use of social experience, impersonally. In earliest culture there was no sharp distinction between these two techniques. In agriculture, for instance, while men had to perform the manual labor with which to obtain the crop, they also established fasts, feasts, and religious dancing, which were intended to placate whatever supernatural forces or persons they supposed controlled agricultural processes. So in other aspects of life there was a correct way of doing things. There were customs which the group maintained; there were persons with peculiar ability to establish helpful relations with these supernatural powers; there were social practices, like feasts, to which these supernatural persons could be invited; there were prayers with which favor could be gained; there were truths about which all these *mores* which were carefully preserved and transmitted as laws.

It is to this sort of behavior that the word "religion" is to be applied. That is to say, it stands for the attempt on the part of man to treat the mysterious forces at whose mercy he finds himself in the same way that he would treat social superiors; or, more formally, religion can be described as actions, more or less rationalized, seeking to gain help through the establishment of personal relations with

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those forces of the universe which are judged capable of such relationship. Every religion is a technique by which this end is sought.

Such a formal definition is historical rather than metaphysical. It presupposes no belief in a supreme God, or even in gods. These conceptions came through the reflection and rationalizing processes to which men are incurably addicted. But the behavior, the *mores*, the entire technique of a group precedes the concepts which they evolve.

The religious life is not to be identified with any attempted justification of its expression. The chief value of any philosophy of religion appears when the right to a religious life is challenged. Most persons are not given to reflective thought, and follow more easily the customs that the group to which they belong conserves. To them, religious life is more than its justification. It is an actual search for satisfactions of actual needs. Men seek superhuman assistance because of their own impotence. The world is prolific of conditions that cause anxiety and suffering. Nature still abounds in tragedies. Sickness and death, misfortunes of innumerable sorts, occur in every human life. In all such crises men instinctively

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seek help from forces that are greater than they. They do not always conceive of these forces as a personal God, nor do they undertake to rationalize their search. They turn to what they feel may be a possible source of help, as the flower turns to the sun. In moments of their need, when the tension of human relations is all but unendurable, when loved ones are lost and causes fail, when misinterpretations ruin friendships and wrongdoing brings remorse, there is a similar outgoing of life for aid and peace. Here again the religious conceptions are not always definite; but the religious attitude, the search for help through the projection of one's personality into cosmic relations, evokes assurance that the cosmic order has become a source of strength and hope.

Nor is the religious life to be identified with the love of beauty, even though it may be enriched by æsthetic experiences. That which is beautiful does not necessarily aid life to more personal self-expression; and the moral worth of devotion to that which is beautiful is not guaranteed always to develop wider social sympathies.

A distinction is also to be drawn between contemplation and the religious life. It is only when such contemplation itself is a means of gaining the friendship and assistance of some higher power that it may be regarded as religious. Such psychological disci-

pline may be helpful, but also it may be a subtle form of selfishness. The individual must transcend himself, if all his powers are to be employed. For the individual becomes personal only in proportion as he lives intelligently in social relations.

So it is natural that the religious life involves morality. In some cases, it is true, such morality lacks social control and tends toward asceticism. Mistaking the darker side of life as an indication of the unfriendliness of the gods, men have repeatedly thought that they could arouse divine pity by making themselves miserable. So they have practised various sorts of self-denial, and sometimes have not hesitated to inflict actual suffering upon themselves. But even in such cases the tendency of human life to co-operate finds expression; and the men who thus seek by sacrifice to win the divine favor, drift together into co-operative movements, penitents are urged to charity, and not a few great institutions of helpfulness have sprung from some distorted but none the less potent fear that seeks by self-repression to forestall divine wrath.

From these views of personal relations with the superhuman powers has developed the idea of God.

The first stage of such development is to personify, or at least attribute, some sort of personality to various forces upon which man finds himself dependent. Thus polytheism emerges. But the religious life has never been satisfied with such a conception. Experience and reflection alike demand some form of superhuman unity to account for the order of nature. So in him there emerged a belief in one supreme God, or Reason, or Will, to whom all reality is to be referred. Sometimes this monotheistic conception has arisen, as in the case of the Hebrews, by the expansion of the conception of a tribal god; sometimes, as in the case of the Greeks, by way of reflective thought. In the Hindu religion the philosopher deems it impossible to stop with anything like an anthropomorphic conception, and endeavors, by such analogies as are at his disposal, to give significance to the unity of the cosmos itself. This has given rise to a philosophical pantheism, but in the case of the Hindus the religious life seems unable to find all its satisfactions in religious philosophy alone, and for practical needs turns to clearly pictured gods and goddesses.

In Western civilization the conception of God has followed the natural development of the evolving civilization. Personal adjustment implies personal response. Men have used whatever conception seemed to them final in their experience as a means



of setting forth their relations with the higher power. Naturally, in a prescientific age, the pattern used was that of politics, and men thought of God as an absolute sovereign. Much of their theological thinking was shaped in corollaries of this conception, and theology became transcendentalized politics. But the actual religious life of the West is not to be identified with its theological formulas. While its learned men have been endeavoring to think of the God substance as tripersonal, to justify prayer, faith, hope, and life beyond death, the people themselves have been praying and hoping and performing such rites as would assure blessed immortality. That theology has had its part in clarifying thoughts of God and the appropriate expressions of the religious life, goes without saying; but as human life has become more complicated, and the variations in experience and inheritances have grown more pronounced, religious life has tended to seek variety of expression and organization. Those whose dominant attitude is scientific are using scientific patterns in which to legitimize their religious faith. Democrats are endeavoring to use the symbols of democracy, just as the creators of absolute sovereignty used the politics of their day. In the constant interplay between the intellectual life and religious self-expression, the religious life has decreasingly concerned itself with the impersonal environment which is the domain of

the natural sciences, and has found in the development of personal values its more effective expression.

Difficulties naturally arise from this change in patterns of the idea of God. We naturally indentify the form of our thought with its content, and use the one as well as the other as a major premise from which to draw specific conclusions. Practices and certain ideas that are really the extension of a religious pattern become sacred. The habit, for example, of pleading liturgically with God for mercy, is the outcome of the conception of Him as a supreme unconstitutional ruler of the sort known to those who originated the liturgy. So, too, the need of substitutionary suffering, intended to satisfy the dignity or punitive justice of God. Originally springing from a useful analogy, these portrayals of the divine character have been treated as literal facts, and to resolve them once more into analogies is to cause confusion in many earnest minds.

When this process of resolving religious patterns is carried out methodically, it very frequently results in a denial of the legitimacy of the religious life itself. Nor is it difficult to see why. The critic of an idea of God is likely to treat that conception as interchangeable with God himself. And indeed, it would probably be correct, from an epistemological point of view, to say that one element in the concept "God" will always be the interpretative pattern in

which faith personifies the personality-producing forces in the universe. But it is certainly as much a mistake on the part of the philosophical radical as on that of the orthodox Christian to identify a pattern with the total reality and to feel that all the elements of a concept have been annihilated by the abandonment of the concept itself. If we no longer speak of God as an old man, with the power of an Oriental king magnified to the extent of imagination, we can still seek fellowship with those elements of the total Activity that have evolved human personality.

For even though a belief in an individual God may have disappeared as men distrust a religious pattern, their sense of dependence upon forces outside themselves, and their further tendency to set up personal relations therewith, do not cease. Life itself forbids. Contradictory as it may seem, the religious life may persist even though a belief in a God of traditional monotheism may have disappeared. This, of course, is only to reverse the process that has been clearly traced in the history of religion. As the primitive man passed from a sense of dependence upon force to personification of such forces, so the radical thinker of today passes from the conception of a Semetic, or even Hellenistic or Christian, Deity to dependence upon forces which, as an observer of nature, he cannot deny.

If religion were philosophy or metaphysics, such a revolutionary change in intellectual attitudes might very well give serious concern to the man who sees in religion a conservative and inspiring element of our social life. The abandonment of any element of social control, however justified it may be, carries with it other consequences than itself. The disintegration of authority at any point in social life is apt to induce change of a similar sort in other phases of life, especially in the moral. To a considerable extent conventional morality has grown up around a definite conception as to the relation of God to human conduct. If that God disappears, distrust is sure to arise relative to the morality for which he was held responsible. I would not be understood as indicating that every man who gives up the idea of a personal God runs amuck through the Ten Commandments. Such a view runs counter to experience and to good sense. But no one can come in contact with lives that have not yet reached self-directive control, without viewing with apprehension any breakdown in idealistic control or the abandonment of what is regarded as an intellectually untenable faith. It is not so much that men and women deliberately undertake to be moral anarchs, as that the disintegrating process proceeds through the entire structure of their inner life unobserved. Cynical views as to justice and honesty and chastity are easy

to minds religiously disillusioned. The perspective of values very frequently becomes disarranged, and lives grow morally soft, because they yield without censorship to the impulses of the moment. Although the futility of an attempt to do exactly as one pleases, whenever one pleases, sooner or later is taught by experience, the loss of religious certainty has within it the possibilities of moral tragedy.

Yet such an abandonment of the patterns of the religious life does not always have these negative results. In the midst of intellectual readjustment, many persons find it impossible to abandon the activities of a religious life. More or less uncertain as to the nature of God, they do not suppress the basal conviction that there is intelligibility and purpose in the world, and that it is possible not only to live on that hypothesis, but also to gain peace and power by so doing. Particularly is this true if such persons maintain membership in a religious group whose theology they may not share, but with whose attitudes they feel themselves in sympathy.

The possibility of setting up this personal relationship with an environing Activity lies back of what is known as mysticism. Whatever else that word

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may represent, it certainly stands for the attempt of human life to establish unity with personal forces. The very patterns in which the experience is described indicate this, for the language of the mystic is commonly the language of romantic love. Psychologically speaking, the mystic seeks this fellowship by an immediate contact of his emotional self with the spiritual forces of the universe. In so far it implies a revolt against the effort to substitute an intellectual regularity of thought and formula for experience. The real criticism to be placed upon mysticism is not that it undertakes direct contact with the Deity, but that it is as incomplete as the formal orthodoxy from which it differs; over-emphasizing emotion, it relies too much upon the exclusion of the intellectual rather than upon self-expression.

The permanent element in mysticism is better expressed in some term like bio-mysticism. The adjustment between the living organism and its environment must always involve the activities of both the total organism and the environment. Some of these may be more in evidence than others; but life does not divide itself into sections. The real difference between the scientific and the religious adjustment to cosmic reality lies in the aspects of the cosmic environment with which the relationship is sought, and the technique of seeking that relationship. Both alike

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are expressions of the imperative demand for adjustment and appropriation of that upon which life is dependent. Science turns to the impersonal, and religion to the personal elements.

There is no need of pointing out to any serious thinker the task set the scientifically trained person who endeavors to be religious. It is as difficult for him to realize the possibility of personal relations to the universe as it is for the primitive man to possess the scientific habit of thought and habit of action. The primitive man thinks only in terms of personalism; the scientific man tends to think only in terms of technique and apparatus. Where technique, to the unscientific, seems to be magic or the work of the Devil, to the scientific man prayer and the attempt at personal relations with the universe seem superstition. The danger that besets religious adventure is that of the underemphasis of the mechanistic and the overemphasis of the personal elements of man's environment; and the danger that besets the scientific is the underemphasis of the personal and the overemphasis of the mechanistic.

Religion is not a synonym of ignorance. Whatever dangers beset a scientific attitude of mind, certain facts are undeniable, and it is upon them that the justification of the religious life must certainly rest: (1) either those self-directive elements which man finds within himself must spring from a self-directive



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personal entity in the universe, or (2) they must have sprung from that mysterious process which is called evolution. If the former of the two alternatives is true, and God is an independent being, a creator and preserver of the natural order, there is no difficulty in justifying the religious life. Any person who lived in a universe subject to such a God would be thoroughly improvident if he did not undertake to maintain friendly relations with him. That is what makes the appeal of religion and religious superstition so vivid to minds that have not been touched by the thought of natural law. They have only to raise their conceptions of earthly majesty or parental love to the *n*th power to have the benevolent Sovereign and Father of the universe.

But if one takes — as in my opinion one must — the evolutionary point of view, the religious position is by no means to be abandoned. For if those characteristics and activities in human life which we call personal are the outcome of the evolutionary process, then there must be in the forces that produced them that which is sufficiently like themselves to make that production possible. One simply cannot, by any stretch of the imagination, think of personal powers emerging from that which has no power to produce them, and such power of production implies some quality which makes such personal relations themselves possible.



This, of course, is not to say that what we call personality is an entity in the midst of that which is impersonal. We have to free our minds of all sorts of materialistic concepts, even though they be so highly materialized as those involved in the popular conception of spirit. What we are actually dealing with as the ultimate of thought is activity, and this activity has in its self-expression produced a succession of ever more complicated entities. Each one of these products must live in relationship with that activity which has determined its nature, and it must live in accordance with its own character. The number of those elements of the total activity with which it can enter into relationship seems to be in the same order as its own complicated structure. The crystal, the plant, the animal, represent an ever increasing number of points of contact with the total activity from which they sprang. In humanity the capacities of its complicated structure are vastly increased. For the first time we have not only an animal with reflexes, but one with memory of its history and an ability to forecast its ends. Its means of communication are vastly increased; and a social order, with its increased capacity of further complicated organization, emerges. But all of this is different from the powers of the lower types. However much the human being may be dependent upon his inheritances, he also is able to set up new relations with and derive

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help from the elements of his environment that have evolved what we roughly call personality. The individual is thus empowered, by cosmic and social environment alike, to address himself to values of which the animal, because of his less complete power of adjustment, is ignorant.

In so doing, the human person is simply making explicit that which must in the nature of the case have been potential in the ultimate activity from which he came. Personality cannot be thought of as simply mechanistic, and no one has ever been rash enough to organize life on the supposition that it is simply mechanistic.

The law of adjustment of the organism to the active environment is, however, still in operation. A water breathing animal that becomes air breathing must be adjusted to the appropriation of elements in that environment to which he owes his transformation. So the animal that has become a personalized animal must live in proper relationship to that environment which has made that change possible, and respond to its activities of the same order. And that is what we mean by religion. It is an attempt to establish a help gaining relationship with those elements of environment which have resulted in the evolution of man's personal powers. For him to live as if he were not personal is to degenerate. For him to live as if the forces that have produced him had

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stopped working, and that the environing relationship no longer evoked response, is to deprive himself of the co-operation with that environment in the midst of which by his very nature he himself lives. As the water breathing animal must live in water, and the air breathing animal must live in air, so the personality-appropriating animal must live in the midst of personality.

Such an environment is, of course, double. On the one side, and more observable, are the relations with other human beings, each of whom is seeking some sort of personal end. The co-ordination of these units causes the individual to grow and develop by participation in the active social order. Indeed, it might almost be said that the person is the individual responding to a social environment. As these personal relations set up by society are realized; and as human needs become more acute, the development of personality follows, and activities naturally become more complete. It is only where life is lived in comfort, that the development of personality ceases. Where Nature constantly demands social co-operation, because of climate or scarcity, the development of personality values increases. Though one must not make hasty generalizations as to the dependence of human personality upon geographical forces, the fact remains that personal development is marked only where the tensions of life are most in conscious-

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ness. There are civilizations that are miserable or static because men have not intelligently responded to the personal environment; but there are no civilizations placing high values on personality, where the problems of life have been simple and easily answered. A highly developed, many-sympathied personality is developed only in those social orders where because of physical needs, men have endeavored to set up more complete personal relations among themselves, in the interests of satisfying other than merely animal wants.

This experience of dwelling with persons, and this consciousness of larger personal worth, the religious man utilizes in establishing reciprocal personal relationship with the envioning reality of the universe. From the elements of this experience he forms his concept of those forces of the universe with which he is attempting to set up personal relations. God therefore becomes very real to him. From the mass of sense perceptions which results from contact with human beings, he organizes his conception of a human person with whom he can have the relation of friend. In the same way does he make his idea of God from his experience in social and cosmic relations. Psychologically it is no more difficult to organize the conception of personality from one set of experiences than from another. An idea of a human person is due to our discovery in the physical

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world of human forces with which we find that we can have personal relations; and God is our personification of those cosmic forces which have produced us as persons and with which we can have personal relations.

The techniques in which our vital trust in a cosmic Person expresses itself are as varied as cultural habits; but, as might be expected, those acts which are practised by all human beings form a sort of common divisor in religious practices. Thus, almost universally, we find the use of water in the interests of ceremonial cleansing, the use of feasts as a form of religious ceremony, the use of conversational methods for prayer, the practice of giving gifts to superiors as one motive to sacrifice, the organization of religious groups as a basis of liturgy. As men grow more intelligent, some of these practices lose their appeal, although the inertia of a social movement is apt to carry them along in some religious body. The most significant of them is prayer. In fact, so important is this that Sabatier and others have made prayer and religion essentially the same. There is a good basis for this identification, for prayer is simply the use of the habits of communication be-

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tween human persons as a means of setting up personal relations with superhuman persons. Such a projection of human custom is a characteristic factor of the religious life, and is easily understood. Conversation is the one universal method of setting up personal relations.

The objections to prayer are chiefly intellectual, and spring from a sense of the difficulties that inhere in any scientific adjustment to forces of the universe. But after one has limited the area within which he is to pray, and no longer, like his ancestors, seeks to accomplish changes in the physical universe, and no longer feels that there is something compelling in a form of words, the instinct to give self-expression for the purpose of setting up personal relations through which help and satisfactions can be gained is unquenchable. A philosophy or a theology may modify one's practices, but they do not seem to be able to end this sense of dependence, even though it take the form, as is so frequently the case, of an unintelligent dependence upon Fate or Chance. The significant aspect of the religious life is not that for which one prays, but that he prays. The question of whether prayer is answered in changes in the environment of the one who prays, is less important than the urge to establish some sort of reciprocity with superhuman reality after the fashion of personal relations between men.

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In all such considerations, however, we are concerned with the actual religious life rather than with its rationalization. And this means a study of religious people. One would no more study the religious life among those who are least interested in its possession than one would study æsthetics among those who despise beauty. And in the actual observation of the religious life one discovers that it is not strictly individualistic. The sense of solitariness, of which Whitehead speaks, is, after all, conditioned by social relations in which we all are. A philosopher's religion may be apparently independent of group life, but the chances are that it is descended from some form of religious society. The search for personal values and the establishment of personal relations always involve some sort of social activity. Just as the primitive races carry along customs, the observation of which is tantamount to religion itself, so in our more highly complicated social life we find the codification of social practices in rites and liturgies and practices of ecclesiastical bodies. Nor could it easily be otherwise. Just as education centers around the co-operative forms of schools, colleges, universities, and similar institutions, so the attempt to set up personal relations with the universe is given practice and content by co-operation between persons who constitute a religious group.



Closely allied to this is the development of literature which a group may hold as containing truth that it would preserve. Few religions that have any history lack such sacred literature. In many cases it comes to play an authoritative rôle in the religious life as a conservative force. Regard for such literature is more closely allied to the observance of custom than to scientific inquiry, and doubtless it is for this reason that any readjustment of a religion to new social conditions involves a struggle between those who seek to maintain literal observance of the sacred literature and those who are more set on the observance of vital personal relations. But in any case the importance of a sacred literature to the religious life cannot be questioned, especially when one thinks of that of the Jew, the Christian, the Mohammedan, the Brahmin, the Buddhist, and the Confucianist.

It remains to call attention to the fact that the religious life can be checked and to a considerable extent repressed by antisocial actions, and even more by an overemphasis of the rationalizing process. Admittedly, we know little of the great Activity with which we seek to come into personal relations;



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and, admittedly, all of our religious thoughts are patterns, and our religious activities are the sublimation of social action.

In the case of those who seek to do others wrong, the religious life becomes a liability rather than an asset to society. There is always danger lest such persons shall so misuse the institutions of religion as to gain a superstitious feeling of safety and freedom from the consequences of their deeds. While, of course, such a misuse of religion is not justifiable, it cannot be overlooked; for unless the religious life is controlled by a desire to establish social goods, it may become a source of injury. The very mystery surrounding the object of its faith gives to it a value that may easily become a source of enmity and even hatred. The desire to champion beliefs has only too frequently aroused the spirit of persecution and war. Indeed, like all ultimate needs in human personality, the religious life in itself needs to be brought under the control of the highest conceptions of human values. It is this striking characteristic that has given to Christianity its peculiar position in life. At the center of its religious hopes and practices is the dramatic figure of Jesus giving his life for others, rather than seeking his own advantage. Allied with this is the teaching that God himself may be trusted as Goodwill, and that goodwill is therefore, like any other expression of cosmic

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activity, a safe basis upon which to build social institutions.

No one can watch the development of the religious life, from its earliest expression to its present highly complicated and intelligent form, without wonder. That men should have developed the materials of civilization, used the forces of nature to further their physical well being, organized themselves socially for the sake of peace and protection, is in itself a fact that differentiates men from all other forms of animal life. But they all can find justification in the field of physical experiment. The religious life, on the other hand, has persisted with an ever decreasing reliance upon physical force, and with constant disillusionment as to inherited beliefs and practices. The simple, though mysterious, universe of early man has been replaced by the ever increasing mystery of the universe of modern science. The pressure of physical needs has been to a considerable extent relieved by a new control of nature. Social and political organizations have grown vastly more complicated, and the individual has proportionately felt his dependence upon social institutions for the good things of life. Yet despite this marvellous

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development, men have tenaciously held to the belief that despite the pressure of outward environment they are yet in some way masters of their fate. At every attempt to reduce human life to a mechanistic relationship or chemical reaction, they have re-affirmed their belief that they themselves are more than machines, and that there is a freedom of personal relationship even with the universe itself. After all concessions have been made to the impersonal appropriation of nature, men have instinctively felt that their very vitality demands some other and more personal relationship than that of the machine and the chemical retort. Therefore they have prayed, and in praying they have refused to disbelieve the existence of intelligent will about them and of intelligent will within them. In the relationship of the two they have found not an absolute freedom, for that is obviously impossible to affirm, but a personal freedom that is made possible by a personal relationship with the elements of that cosmic Activity from which they are and in which they must live. Thus it is that the religious life persists. Creeds that once gave satisfaction, rites and practices that helped men of the olden days to courage and peace, all these may disappear; but the religious life itself does not disappear, and even these expressions of its activity are not destroyed, but replaced by new formulas, new practices, which more perfectly and intelligently

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allow the religious life to express itself. In the end, such life is its own justification. It can be repressed only at the cost of personal values. It can be made more effective as it is the better directed by intelligence. But so long as humanity is human, religion cannot be destroyed; for it is a phase of the life process, seeking to gain satisfaction of its needs by an adjustment of its personal elements to the forces that have made those personal elements possible, and which still are active.



RELIGION AND  
PERSONALITY

Ernest F. Tittle



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**A** MAN may be braver than his creed. The materialist declares that what the religionist calls the human soul is nothing other than a bundle of physical reflexes. Yet he himself, no less than the religionist, may display a passionate enthusiasm for truth and beauty and goodness. He may sit up nights wrestling with some problem in philosophy, rave over a sunset or work of art, and mentally castigate himself for some failure to be thoroughly just or kind to his neighbor. All of which is obviously inconsistent with his creed. For, if men are nothing more than chemical compounds, how futile for them to wrestle with any kind of problem, how strange for them to become enamored of any kind of beauty, and how needless for them to feel exercised over any kind of moral deficiency!

Fortunately, men may be, and often are, far braver than their creeds. But, undeniably, a man's creed, if he hold it in any sincere and earnest fashion, will eventually determine his deed. It will, in fact, influence his whole outlook on life. The creed of

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materialism, if generally accepted, would destroy men's vision of moral distinction, and leave them unprovided with any spiritual incentives. If Jesus and Judas both are but chemical compounds, one may still prefer the compound called Jesus to the compound called Judas; but certainly he cannot suppose that the compound called Judas may be charged with moral delinquency, or that it might have been anything other than it actually was. And if, perchance, one makes the discovery that his own chemical composition resembles that of Judas, there is, on this theory, nothing that he may do to improve his "personality." He must needs go on "reacting" in just the way in which he is now "reacting," even though that means another Calvary. A thoroughgoing materialism rules out all belief that there is, in the nature of life, any basis for moral distinction, and so destroys all hope that men may become other than they are, all faith that out of the crude materials of today may be built a more splendid tomorrow.

But are human beings merely chemical compounds with certain interesting reactions? When Captain Scott was on the point of perishing in the Antarctic wastes, one of his party, Captain Oates, did a very gallant deed. Suffering from frost-bitten feet, he realized that he was delaying the progress of his comrades and so imperilling the slim chance that remained to them. One evening, therefore, without saying a word as to his intention, he limped off into



a blizzard, never to return. When news of this splendid sacrifice was given to the world, Frank Parker Stockbridge penned some significant lines. He imagined a group of thoroughgoing materialists insisting that men are but chemical compounds, reacting to various stimuli; and to them he made answer:

“ Pardon me, gentlemen, but — it’s a lie !

‘ Reactions,’ eh ? Well, what’s your formula  
For one particular kind — I won’t insist  
On proof of every theorem in the list  
But only one — what chemicals combine,  
What  $\text{CO}_2$  and  $\text{H}_2\text{SO}_4$ ,  
To cause such things as happened yesterday,  
To send a very gallant gentleman  
Into Antarctic night, to perish there  
Alone, not driv’n nor shamed nor cheered to die,  
But fighting, as mankind has always fought,  
His baser self, and conquering, as mankind  
Down the long years has always conquered self ?

What are your tests to prove a man’s a man ?  
Which of your compounds ever lightly threw  
Its life away, as men have always done,  
Spurr’d not by lust nor greed nor hope of fame,  
But casting all aside on the bare chance  
That it might somehow serve the Greater Good ?

There’s a reaction — what’s its formula ?  
Produce that in your test-tubes if you can ! ” } }

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Now religion, it hardly needs to be said, is on the side of the poet. It insists upon the presence and glory of a spiritual element in human life. That part of man's being which is capable of error, but capable also of pursuing truth and of giving allegiance to whatever of truth has been discovered; that part of man's being which is capable of doing things that are socially harmful, but capable also of doing, at great personal cost, things that are socially helpful; that part of man's being which is capable of appreciating beauty, of experiencing love, and of forming and following ideals beyond any present achievement — that, says religion, cannot be expressed by any chemical formula. It is not in the nature of matter, although it may for a time have its residence in matter and be to some extent dependent upon matter. But even during the period of residence in, and dependence upon, that which we somewhat uncertainly call matter, it transcends matter, is something vastly more than matter without it can ever be.

Religion further insists that this spiritual element in human life has something corresponding to it in the universe itself.

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We do well, I think, to face the fact that if a man is quite alone in a universe that knows nothing of his struggles and cares nothing for his ideals, and which, by and by, will blindly annihilate him, his labor is eventually in vain. Mr. Bertrand Russell has the courage to face the implication of his convictions, and believing as he does that man is "the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms," and that "no intensity of thought and feeling can preserve an individual life beyond the grave," he feels compelled to acknowledge that on this view "all the labors of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system."

It may, of course, be claimed that even so a great deal of interesting and worthful adventure is possible to the human spirit. This claim Mr. Russell himself makes. He believes that men may be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in work that is interesting and inherently worthful, even though they suspect that their labor in the end will be thrown away. And to do him justice, let it be said that to a very notable degree he has illustrated by example what he has taught as precept. But there is this also to be said about Bertand Russell. He belongs to an old and famous family, distinguished for generations by its idealism and public spirit. His

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grandfather, Lord John Russell, championed such causes as universal free education and free trade. And surely one may suspect that a strain of idealism of such unusual strength as that which has appeared in the Russell family might continue to manifest itself for a generation or two, even though it were unsupported by any kind of religious faith.

But the fact remains that, historically speaking, idealism is rooted in religion. That noble internationalism of which Mr. Russell is so outstanding an exponent was not born of a philosophy which said that the universe cares nothing for man's hopes and fears. It was born of a faith which dared to believe that underneath all sorts and conditions of men are the everlasting arms of God. It was not the emancipated Greek, with his growing skepticism concerning the validity of any sort of religious belief, who cherished the vision of a human society recognizing no barrier between Jew and Greek, Scythian and barbarian, male and female, bond and free. That vision was cherished by an emancipated Jew who saw the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Is it likely that any such vision would continue to be cherished by men who believed that they were living in a world that was utterly purposeless, and who confidently expected that they themselves and all their fellows were destined to

be buried for ever beneath the débris of a universal catastrophe?

It will, no doubt, be said — and finely said — that men ought to pursue a noble ideal for its own sake, whether or no there is anything corresponding to it in the constitution of the world. But surely it is asking a good deal of human nature to strive in sweat and blood for the attainment of something which, even though by some miracle of skill and courage it should one day be achieved, is destined at last to be thrown away. Is it not, in fact, asking too much? In a world that is favorable to the realization of noble ideals, a world that cares enough about spiritual values to keep them alive, men may find heart and strength for seemingly impossible tasks. They may face the lurking foes of nature, and even the lurking frightfulness of civilization, with the ringing declaration, "Whatever ought to be can be." But in a world that was, if not actually hostile, at least completely indifferent to human aspiration, and in which, by and by, the whole structure of man's achievement must be irretrievably destroyed, what wonder if men should ask, "What's the use?" An occasional Bertrand Russell, who is himself the product of an idealism to which religion has given birth, may find it possible to say to his doomed fellows, "Be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in heroic endeavor, even though ye know that

your labor in the end will be in vain." But who can blame them if the multitude of men do not respond to any such appeal?

Religion contributes to the development of personality by insisting upon the presence and glory of a spiritual element in human life, and by nourishing the belief that this spiritual element in the life of man has something corresponding to it in the universe itself.

Religion, moreover, has created a profound respect for personality. "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" When Jesus put that question, he placed the value of the human soul as high as it can possibly be placed. He declared that it has infinite value in the sight of God. In one of his Yale lectures, Sylvester Horne maintained that the Christian gospel is contained in a single verse of one of the great Christian hymns:

"Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were a present far too small;  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my soul!"

“That means,” says Sylvester Horne, “that the soul of every forced laborer on the Amazon is of more value than all the mines of Johannesburg, all the diamonds of the Kimberley, all the millions of all the magnates of America. It affirms that in God’s sight all the suns and stars that people infinite space are of inferior worth to one human spirit, dwelling it may be in the degraded body of some victim of drink or lust, some member of the gutter population of a great city, who has descended to his doom by means of the manifold temptations by which society environs him.”

That has been the contention, not always of ecclesiastical Christianity, but certainly of the religion of Jesus. And for nineteen hundred years the religion of Jesus has striven to create a social environment in which all sorts and conditions of men would have at least a chance to rise. Under slavery there was, of course, no respect for the personality of the slave. Under feudalism there was no reverence for the personality of the serf. Under industrialism, until comparatively recent years, small regard has been shown for the personality of the wage earner. You do not need to go back as far as a hundred years to find such conditions in English coal mines as may be suggested by the fact that engines, used to lower men down the shafts and lift them to the surface, were operated by children from nine to twelve years

of age, the result being "a prodigal loss of life through childish carelessness."<sup>1</sup> In those days, when an accident occurred in the mines and some human life was snuffed out, people said, "Oh, it's only a miner." Even the miners themselves, once they had learned the name of the dead man, went on with their work as though nothing had happened. And if, through the larger part of human history, personality in underprivileged men has been accorded but scant respect, what shall be said of personality in women and in children? Think of the uncountable multitude of women who have been regarded merely as beasts of burden or as instruments for the satisfaction of masculine lust. Think of the innumerable generations of children who have been beaten and browbeaten by easily irritated adults, whose greater physical strength gave them an advantage which they meanly used.

But now, at last, thanks largely to Christian influence, the suggestion is coming: Let us reverence personality, not only in lords but in laborers, not only in ladies but in ladies' maids, not only in adults but in children. Many a man still regards and treats some persons as though they were less than persons, as though they were little more than animated machines for ministering to his comfort: but the conviction is gaining ground that so to treat any person

<sup>1</sup> See Bready's "Lord Shaftesbury," p. 267 ff.



is shameful, that it is, indeed, a sin against God — against all that is godlike in a human soul. As that conviction does advance, a multitude of folk will have such an opportunity for the development of personality as the multitude of men have never before enjoyed.

Religion is not a dispensable luxury, it is an indispensable necessity. Even though you take the position — and nobody does take it — that physical life is the only life that really matters, how will you maintain physical life on this whirling planet, how will you keep men from destroying one another unless you convince them that human life is sacred, and how will you do that without religion? And if you are concerned to preserve, not only the body, but also the soul of the race, how will you do that without religion? In the face of the contention that man is but a child of the dust, a collection of atoms, noble if an atom is noble, but no nobler, religion maintains that now is man a son of God, and it doth not yet appear what he shall be.<sup>2</sup>

Nor has religion merely created a profound respect for personality; it has developed a type of personality which is worthy of respect.

The eugenicist insists that the difference between human individuals is innate: that some people are

<sup>2</sup> This paragraph is borrowed from the chapter on "Reverence," in my book, "The Religion of the Spirit."

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talented, others untalented, and that talented persons may develop into geniuses, but that untalented persons must forever remain dolts. The behaviorist insists that the difference between human individuals is not nearly so much a difference in nature as it is a difference in nurture: that it is due, not to heredity, but to training, the sort of stimuli to which every individual, especially in infancy, is exposed. At least one behaviorist has not hesitated to predict that in a not distant future "the delusion of 'talent' will vanish into the limbo of witchcraft, the evil eye, and the casting of spells."<sup>3</sup> All the behaviorists say, "Give me your baby and I will make it conform to any pattern which you may name and desire." The eugenicist takes stock in intelligence tests, and is inclined to believe that unless your I.Q. is 130 or over, you have no more chance of becoming a genius or, indeed, of attaining any kind of personal excellence, than you have of flying to the moon. The behaviorist believes that intelligence tests are themselves unintelligent, and is inclined to hope that, given the proper nurture, almost any individual who is physically sound may make some worthwhile contribution to the world.

It is, no doubt, too soon to say which of these learned doctors is right, or the more right. But

<sup>3</sup> Alfred Adler, "Character and Talent," in *Harper's Magazine*, June, 1927.

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there is, in either or any case, at least one disturbing, and at the same time heartening, fact of which religion takes note, namely, that no single one of us has reached, or even nearly reached, his own limit of personal development. A man who may never develop the personality of a Goethe or a Lincoln, may, nevertheless, develop a far more forceful and attractive personality than he now possesses, and he is likely to do so if he exposes himself to any vital and noble type of religion.

One of the first things which religion at its best does for a man is to create in him a number of new wants. In his great poem, "General William Booth Enters Into Heaven," Vachel Lindsay represents that conquering hero of the world of spirit as leading to the throne of God:

" Drabs from the alleyways and drug-fiends pale —  
Minds still passion-ridden, soul-powers frail!  
Vermin-eaten saints with mouldy breath,  
Unwashed legions with the ways of death."

Yes, but is it not a noticeable fact that the moment some vermin-eaten slum dweller gets religion, the

real thing, he is no longer content to remain unwashed? He discovers in himself new wants — soap and water, clean underwear and a toothbrush, a decent suit of clothes. And is not one of the most reliable tests of the reality of a man's "conversion" the question, Does he want a job? Once he has gotten a job and begun to make good in it, an astonishing number of additional wants begin to make themselves felt. On college campuses and at student conferences, I have talked to a number of men who told me that the thought of getting a college education never entered their heads until a religious experience waked them up. So, one after another, vital religion creates in men new wants, until at last they discover in themselves a desire to attain that full measure of human development which was found in Jesus Christ.

After William James had collected the data for his famous Gifford Lectures on "The Varieties of Religious Experience," he felt impelled to say that "the best fruits of religious experience are the best things which history has to show"; and that "to call to mind a succession of such examples as" he had come upon in the preparation of those lectures, was "to feel encouraged and uplifted and bathed in better moral air." Who can read without emotion a passage such as this: "People who are immoral or idolaters or adulterers or sensual or given to unnatural vice or thieves or greedy — drunkards, abu-

sive people, robbers — will not have any share in God's kingdom. Some of you used to be like that; but you have washed it all away, you have been consecrated, you have become upright, by the power of the Lord Jesus Christ and through the spirit of our God.”<sup>4</sup> Religion at its best develops a type of personality that is worthy of respect.

And, finally, religion nourishes the hope that personality will be preserved.

In our time the suggestion has been made that the hope of immortality represents a somewhat selfish desire for the prolongation, beyond the grave, of one's own little life. This desire, some have thought, represents the very antithesis of the essentially religious attitude, inasmuch as religion at its best involves self-renunciation. To this objection, Principal Jacks has returned what seems to be an irrefutable answer. “The question [of immortality],” he says, “affects not only the value a man attaches to himself, but the value he attaches to other people. I can respect a man who, for philosophic reasons, is indifferent to the prospect of his coming annihilation by death. But I find it much harder to respect a man

<sup>4</sup> I Cor. 6:9-11. Goodspeed's translation.

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who is equally indifferent to the annihilation of those whom he reverences and loves."

Is there anyone among us who would willingly consent to the annihilation of his own child? Is there anyone who would not shrink from the thought that a truly great soul like Abraham Lincoln no longer lives? Is there anyone who would not be dismayed by the thought that when Jesus uttered a loud cry and gave up the ghost, that was the end of him? You may get a pretty accurate notion of the moral development of any human individual by raising the question, What estimate does he place on personality? Does he reverence it? Does he look upon it as something having supreme worth? When he looks into the eyes of another human being — any other human being — does he realize that there is in that person something that is sacred? If he does, you may safely conclude that he himself is a highly moralized individual. And is it not altogether right and proper to apply to the universe the same kind of moral test? Is it not fair to ask, What value does the universe place upon personality? In all its higher forms, faith in immortality is the expression of the belief that personality ought not to be destroyed.

On personality the existence of all other great and precious values depends. There are certain values which men themselves hold very dear. Think of the men who have starved in garrets in order to paint

the Thing as they saw It for the God of Things as They Are; and the men who have driven themselves like slaves in the pursuit of knowledge; and the men who have gone through fire and blood for love's sake; and the men who have yielded up their lives for righteousness' sake. Truth, beauty, love, goodness — these are values which our greatest and best men have held very dear. Ought not such values to be conserved? On this point there is, I take it, no difference of opinion. Even men who have persuaded themselves that they are, or at least ought to be, willing to have their own lives go out like a candle, are insistent and eager in their reply that truth, beauty, love, goodness, should be conserved. But how can they be conserved unless certain gallant and gracious personalities are conserved? These mighty spiritual values which seem so desirable that men have been willing to die for them, where do they reside? In persons and personal relationships. In some man who has nailed all flesh to the cross until self has died out in the love of his kind. In some union of souls such as that achieved by Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett. Only in persons and personal relationships reside those spiritual values which we want to believe are deathless. If persons themselves should be blotted out, and personal relationships be discontinued, what would become of truth and beauty and love and goodness?

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In "Alice in Wonderland" the grin of the Cheshire cat lingers on after the cat has gone. But will love linger on after every lover has gone? Will idealism linger on after every idealist has gone? Will sincerity, honor, chivalry, linger on after every human relationship has come to an end? The one only way to conserve love is to preserve lovers. The one only way to conserve truth, beauty, goodness, is to preserve men and women who are true and beautiful and good.

But someone may ask, May not the influence of a good man's life linger on after he himself has ceased to be? And if it does linger on, will not spiritual values be conserved, even though the persons in whom they had their birth should be destroyed? By the putting of this question, many an earnest man has sought to reconcile himself to the possibility that his own self may become extinct.

"If I should die, think only this of me:  
That there's some corner of a foreign field  
That is for ever England."

Ah, but will there be for ever England? Is it not conceivable that in the long ago a gallant Roman might have said,

"If I should die, think only this of me:  
That there's some corner of a foreign field  
That is for ever Rome."



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Yet imperial Rome, great and powerful once as England herself now is, has vanished. May not England some day vanish, too?

Sometime in the remote past the race of man had a beginning. Sometime in the remote future it will have an end. Planets, too, are born, grow old, die. Our own relatively little planet will some day become as uninhabitable as the moon.

“The cloud-capp’d towers, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,  
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve;  
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,  
Leave not a rack behind.”

What then? Will any good man’s influence linger on after the entire race is dead?

Notice the picture that we now have before us.<sup>5</sup> A whirling fire mist slowly cools. After millions of years, life appears. After millions of following years, man appears — poets and prophets and heroes and saints. Great art is produced. Great music is written. Great discoveries are made, great inventions evolved. Great ideas are thought, great ideals cherished. Socrates drinks his cup of hemlock. Jesus dies on a cross. Luther takes his stand at Worms. Wesley considers the world his parish. Livingstone lays down his life

<sup>5</sup> For this suggestion I am indebted to Joseph Fort Newton. See his “The Sword of the Spirit,” p. 234.

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for Africa. Lincoln delivers his Gettysburg Address. Tennyson sings of a Parliament of Man, a Federation of the World. Slowly, but surely, man climbs the steep ascent to the heaven of his dreams. Then the earth cools. It becomes a burnt out cinder. It presents the appearance of a vast cemetery, in which no one is left to sing the requiem of the dead. Is that the end? The end of a race? Is that the outcome of millions of years of physical and mental and moral travail? Religion says, No! The individual passes. Generations come and go. Nations flourish and perish. Civilizations rise and fall. Planets run their inevitable course from flaming heat to killing cold. Is there nothing that abides? Religion says, Yes! It says: "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."



THE SPIRIT  
Rufus M. Jones



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**F**EW religious problems in man's history have received so much effort of thought as has the doctrine of the Trinity. The time and labor and genius bestowed upon its elucidation might, if turned in other channels, almost have rebuilt the social fabric of humanity. I am not inclined, however, to regret that so much pains has been taken to clarify the essential nature of God. It was in the main, I humbly think, the right direction for human thought to take. I only regret that so little clarity and such meager practical results have been achieved by all these ages of agonizing speculation. The creeds of the churches bear quiet witness to the long struggle of thought, but the rank and file of those who compose the communions of Christendom can point to very little in their actual thought of God that has been contributed to their minds by these centuries of fierce debate. And of all the aspects of the endless trinitarian problem the one that has received the least measure of clarity and elucidation is the nature of the Spirit.

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The creeds are almost silent on this point, and the individual interpreters have taken and still take multitudinous and diverse tracks of thought on the subject. Some excellent studies have been made by modern writers, but even so we have thus far hardly got beyond the fringes of this central topic of religious thought.

There has been some careful work done in recent times on the conception of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament, in the Wisdom Literature, and in the Apocalypses. C. Anderson Scott has given us an admirable article on "What happened at Pentecost,"<sup>1</sup> and there are sound and scholarly contributions available on the conception of the Spirit as found in St. Paul and in the Johannine writings. What the modern reader needs most is an enlightening study of the Spirit of God as revealed in immediate relation to our finite human spirits. I shall in this paper confine myself almost entirely to that aspect of the subject. The revelation of God in history needs much more elucidation than it has received, but obviously it cannot be dealt with in this brief study. The same thing, too, may be said of the historical doctrine of the Holy Spirit. It deserves far more careful attention than it has yet received, but I shall not undertake now to interpret that historical movement. I shall keep *the divine-human relation as revealed*

<sup>1</sup> In Canon Streeter's "The Spirit."

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*within us* at the center of this consideration. It has been customary in the past to begin *above*, with the ultimate nature of God, and to interpret the Spirit as the *procession* outward and downward of the Life and Love of God. I shall be inclined to begin my account here below, where we actually are, and to move upward toward that great Life that completes us. I prefer to start with the indubitable facts of our own experience.

We need to learn how to think of God as a resident presence co-operating vitally *with us* here and now, and at the same time we need just as urgently to see how our human lives can and do open out into a Beyond within ourselves. Almost every person who has attained to a mature spiritual life has had experiences which convinced him, at least in high moments, that he was *more than himself*. Help comes from somewhere and enables us to do what we thought could not be done. We seem to be able to withstand the universe when its waterspouts are let loose and are likely to go over us. We have found strength from beyond our own stock of resources in some hard crisis. We do not know how far our own margins of being reach. We cannot completely map

the full area that properly belongs to *us*. No one can with certainty draw the boundary between himself and the beyond himself, any more than we can tell where river ends and ocean begins; but we unmistakably feel, on occasions, that tides from beyond our own margins sweep into us and refresh us. A friend of mine has very well stated this important fact of life as follows: "Only when we discover that there is an inexhaustible reservoir of moral power not of ourselves, but accessible to us, do we rise on stepping stones of our dead selves to higher things. It is this wellspring of moral energy beyond himself, of which he may partake, that makes a man capable of achieving the superhuman."<sup>2</sup> We want to know more about "this inexhaustible reservoir of moral power." We need more light about this Beyond.

We are only now, after four centuries, gradually becoming aware of the spiritual consequences of the revolutionary discoveries of Copernicus and his followers. For untold ages, before the Polish monk in 1543 upset the ancient theory of the celestial revolutions, the sky was believed to be a crystalline dome with many concentric layers, all of which turned around the central earth, carrying along in unvarying regularity the sun and moon and stars, which were supposed to be set into one or the other of

<sup>2</sup> George Cross, "Christian Salvation," p. 8.



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these rotating crystal domes. The planets wandered about with considerable latitude, and consequently introduced a puzzling problem, which eventually led Copernicus to his startling conclusion. The occasional comets that swept the sky conformed to no system at all, and quite naturally produced fright and terror. They exhibited the very height of irrationality — something in the sky that did not obey the order and harmony of the sky. The falling meteors, too, suggested revolt and disobedience in the upper regions. The story of the fall of Lucifer, told in most vivid style and in faultless poetry in Milton, goes back in its original form to the suggestion of the downward plunge of a falling meteor, which broke away from the divine order and left the sky for ever.

“ From morn

To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve,  
A summer's day; and with the setting sun  
Dropped from the zenith like a falling star.”

This ancient system of thought furnished a happy solution of many of the central problems of religion. The sky, with its perfect order and unvarying regularity, except in the above mentioned instances of variation, seemed to the ancient world to be the vestibule of the spiritual heavens. Above the beauty

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and the glory of the highest sky dome was thought to be the pure region where God dwelt in supreme majesty. The empyrean beyond the revolving spheres was naturally conceived to be the eternal home of the saints of all ages; and all the imagery of heaven, in hymns and poetry and pictorial creations, conforms to this general scheme. In short, the basic structure of religious thought throughout almost the entire history of the race has been built around this sky theory. A great many of the words in the spiritual vocabulary of the widespread Aryan family are words that originally had to do with the *sky*, and we still go on using the word "heavenly" as though it were synonymous with "divine."

Slowly these last four hundred years of astronomical research have forced us to realize that there is no crystal dome above our heads. There is no localized dwelling place for God or for the saints above the sky. The region up there is no more pure or perfect than the region down here. Stars, planets, suns, and moons are just as material in construction as is the earth on which we tread. While we are "looking up" for our sky, the earth dwellers in the antipodes are looking in precisely the opposite direction for their sky. Their up is our down. We have plainly enough outgrown the imagery of the sky for our spiritual realities, and yet we have formed no substitute for it. We know in theory that God is not

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to be found by an ascent into the sky. And we have an intellectual insight that Heaven is not a space-occupying place at the top of the crystal canopy over our heads; but we go on using the old terminology. We teach our children to think of God and of Heaven in terms of the sky, and we make little progress toward working out a new system of thought and toward creating new imagery that will better fit the facts of life and experience as they actually are.

One reason for the breakdown of the faith of so many high minded and serious minded persons in the present time is the collapse of the imagery through which they had at an earlier stage of their lives done all their religious thinking. That imagery has lost its meaning for them and they have found no other form for their creative imagination to work through. It is almost impossible to overestimate the part that pictorial imagery plays in the early life of the child, as well as in the primitive stage of the race; and when the pictured imagery that has been acquired ceases to correspond to *reality*, there is always serious trouble to be expected. That situation has now arrived. There is no harm in continuing to talk of *sunrise* and *sunset*; for when we use the ancient terms, we always interpret the words to mean that the earth moves and not the sun. But when we pass over into our religious vocabulary, we have not yet made

the adjustment, and we have formed no deeper meaning to reinterpret to our minds the old words "sky" and "heaven" as the abode of God and His family of saints. Too often we are left without any *reality* corresponding to the words.

Where are we to turn to find our clue that will lead us back to the reality of God? We can probably never find any imagery in any other domain that will be as vivid and impressive as the sky imagery has been. The blue dome itself seems to the child's mind a perfect paradise for God. The rainbow, rising from earth to heaven, is a glorious sign of love from Him. The lightning easily seems to be His stern messenger, and the thunder His warning voice. But all the time this imagery is carrying the mind over unconsciously to a *spatializing* of God. He is all too easily and naturally thought of as a great Man, sitting on a throne at the apex of the sky dome and acting as a man of might would act. It is easy to think of Him as a God of battles. If He ever wants to reach the earth with a message of His will, He must send someone to bring it from the sky yonder. He is up there; we are down here. One has only to run through the theological thinking of the past to see how child-

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minded its imagery is, and what a large rôle this spatial concept of God has played.

Our new imagery, as I say, will perhaps be less vivid, but perhaps also it may succeed in making God real to us without at the same time making Him to quite the same extent a space-occupying Being. Tennyson, when he was contemplating the coming of his first born son, thinks first of his physical origin and then of his deeper origin from the Spirit of God. He thinks of the boy coming "out of the deep."

"Out of the deep, my child, out of the deep,  
From that great deep before our world begins,  
Whereon the Spirit of God moves as he will —  
Out of the deep, my child, out of the deep,  
*From that true world within the world we see,  
Whereof our world is but the bounding shore —*  
Out of the deep, Spirit, out of the deep,  
With this ninth moon that sends the hidden sun <sup>3</sup>  
Down yon dark sea, thou comest, darling boy."

Here we still have, of course, space implications in the words, "*within the world we see,*" and "*whereof our world is but the bounding shore.*" Tennyson, when speaking of the soul's origin, frequently used the phrase, "drew from out the boundless deep," or the similar one,

<sup>3</sup> *De Profundis*. Italics mine.

“ A soul shall draw from out the vast  
And strike his being into bounds.” <sup>4</sup>

or again, in *In Memoriam*, speaking of the birth and development of the child, he says :

“ Thro the frame that binds him in  
His isolation grows defined.”

In *The Ancient Sage* he refers once more to “ the World within the world we see ” as a deeper World of Spirit :

“ The Abyss of all Abysses, beneath, within  
The blue of sky and sea, the green of earth,  
And in the million-millionth of a grain  
Which cleft and cleft again for evermore,  
And ever vanishing, never vanishes,  
To me, my son, more mystic than myself.”

Tennyson's “ World within ” is plainly enough a spiritual world that environs the soul of man, “ closer than breathing and nearer than hands or feet.” <sup>5</sup> The visible and tangible world for him is a separating, a dividing, reality, rather than a uniting one. The *real World* is close to our inner being: the world of things, on the other hand, introduces space and separation :

<sup>4</sup> *In Memoriam*.

<sup>5</sup> *Higher Pantheism*.

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“Earth, these solid stars, this weight of body and limb,  
Are they not sign and symbol of thy division  
from Him? ”

There is an interesting book, out of the last generation behind us, written by two famous scientists, Stewart and Tait, called *The Unseen Universe*. It endeavors, in a fresh and striking way, to interpret this inner and deeper world. The thought of the book is too much colored by the concepts of physics to be adequate for our full, rich universe of life and thought and beauty, but it is a good beginning in the direction of finding the deeper universe within, rather than above, the visible world.

The French philosopher, Emile Boutroux, has supplied us with a valuable phrase that may help us to link up this deep world of spirit with our own interior life of consciousness. He maintains that the “Beyond ” that we have always been seeking is not in the sky, or in space somewhere. It is a “Beyond within us.” We are no doubt still using a space word, “within,” but we are not using it crudely to describe a *locality*. We are only calling attention to the fact that our conscious experience all the time reveals or implies a “more yet.” William James, in his famous Gifford Lectures, came up from his review of a multitude of experiences to the conclusion that man

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within himself "is conterminous and continuous with a More of the same quality as the higher spiritual part of himself which is operative in the universe outside of him and which he can keep in working touch with." <sup>6</sup> In another passage, James says that "the conscious person is continuous with a wider self through which saving experiences come." <sup>7</sup>

In his latest and maturest period of life, James came back to this hypothesis of a More within us. "Every bit of us," he says, in "A Pluralistic Universe," "at every moment is part and parcel of a wider self, it quivers along various radii like the wind rose on a compass, and the actual in it is continuously one with possibles not yet in our present sight. And just as we are co-conscious with our own momentary margin, may not we ourselves form the margin of some more really central self in things which is co-conscious with the whole of us? May not you and I be confluent in a higher consciousness, and confluent active there though we now know it not?" <sup>8</sup> And finally he draws his own positive conclusion in these words of affirmation: "I think it may be asserted that there *are* religious experiences of a specific nature which point with reasonable prob-

<sup>6</sup> "Varieties of Religious Experience," p. 508.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* p. 515

<sup>8</sup> *Op. cit.* pp. 289-80.



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ability to the continuity of our consciousness with a wider spiritual environment.”<sup>9</sup>

The great mystics, in their own experience, have always been aware of “that wider spiritual environment.” The philosophical mystics of the Middle Ages, especially those who had come under the influence of Aristotle, held that *the ground of the soul* in man is essentially divine, and “never has gone out from God.” Sometimes it is called “the apex of the soul,” sometimes “the soul center,” and sometimes “the ground of the soul,” but in each case the point insisted upon was that there is something in the deeps of man that makes him essentially linked up with God, or at least unsundered from Him — “Spirit with spirit may meet.”

St. Augustine, in a famous passage of his “Confessions,” has tried to give an account of his experience of the Beyond which opens out from within us. This passage from the great Carthaginian saint became a model and pattern for almost all of the later mystics of the Church. The saint and his mother, Monica, were sitting together in the twilight, at Ostia by the Tiber, meditating and communing in

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 299-300.

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one spirit upon the nature of "That which does not change but remains eternally selfsame." They were yearning and aspiring for the homing stairway between the finite and the infinite, and suddenly in a flash of insight they saw that the way home was not a Jacob's ladder in the sky, but only an ascent of the soul by the inward way. They were filled with a flame of passion for the Real and the True and the Beautiful; and straining forward in their thought and desire to rise above all that is visible and tangible, "we came," the saint says, "to our own souls" — like the lost boy in the parable who *came to himself*. In short, they gave up expecting to find God in things or above things or behind things. They left the outward path upward for the interior one through the highway of the soul. "Thither, on the way to God, one journeys," St. Augustine says elsewhere, "not with feet, nor by ships, nor by chariots" (and, we may add, "nor by aeroplanes"), "but only by the momentous will, for to *will completely* to be there is already to have arrived." It is an affair not of distance, but of *Spirit*. And so, here at Ostia, he says, "In one swift leap — in a sudden intuition — we soared out beyond our souls and arrived at *That which is*" — the God who is our Home. In this "trembling flash" God was felt to be "closer than breathing, nearer than hands or feet." He is not away somewhere in another sphere or above the circle of the sky.

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He is where we are when we are attuned for His presence, as the music of another continent suddenly breaks into our radio set, when that radio set is "keyed" rightly to report it. The mystery of one type of experience is no greater than the mystery of another type. At the last we always touch mystery at some point. It comes down, in the last resort, to a question of *fact*, as is true of everything in the sphere of experience. The taste of sweetness, or the color-vision of redness, are just as unanalyzable and just as mysterious as is this instantaneous flash of God. We see stars billions of miles away, only because something from the star is actually operating on the retina and in the visual center of the brain; and so, too, we find God, only because Something that is God — God as Spirit — is actually in contact with the spiritual soul within us.

There is no good reason why we should shy away from such an evident fact as self-transcendence, or why we should be afraid to own it as a fact. Every case of perception is a case of self-transcendence. If we could not leap forward and grasp an object from beyond us, and know it as beyond us, all our experience would be doomed to be shut up in an inner subjective mirage. We could never have dealings and commerce with a real world beyond our inward seemings. We should for ever remain victims of "the egoistic predicament." In a trembling flash, when

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we perceive things, we manage to leap beyond ourselves and know a reality that is not of us, but of a world beyond us. Nobody knows *how* we do it. It is another mystery — like sweetness and redness — but it is none the less a fact. The moment we *know* anything whatsoever, we prove to be self-transcending beings. It is no less obvious that we are self-transcending in all our deepest relations with other *persons*. The moment we reduce the reality of other persons to subjective states within ourselves, we have lost our world and are wanderers in a dreamland. It is a poor, thin psychology that sees in pity, sympathy, and love only a glorification of the ego and not the finding of a new and higher self in and through an *alter* — an other person — that is just as real as the ego is. It seems to be impossible to go out into a real world of social values — in other words, to have a real life — unless a self can transcend itself and can actually deal with a beyond.

Why, then, should we assume that the mystery of the spiritual Beyond within us is the only mystery of self-transcendence. It is always happening. We are never mere “empirical” selves, describable selves, shut up within the hollow circle of our own flighty seemings, which are born of the futile beatings of our own hearts. To feel that one has arrived at *That which is* is no more strange or improbable or miraculous than it is to feel that the person whom

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one loves is a real person, and that love is a genuine revelation. It is all, once more, a question of *fact*. Do the St. Augustines and the St. Monicas give any convincing evidence that they have arrived? The evidence seems to me pretty clear and fairly convincing that they find something that reshapes and rebuilds the interior world within them — and eventually the larger social world around them — as truly as our experience of sense-facts shapes and constructs for us our world of space.

St. Paul, writing to his Corinthian friends, talks of “the demonstration of the Spirit.” He does not tell in any systematic way how the “demonstration” is to be recognized. At Pentecost the most convincing *sign* was, no doubt, the startling aspect of the occasion. The noise of rushing wind, the spits of fire, the sound of tongues speaking, were marvels that moved every beholder. Something unique and novel was happening. Peter declared that the wonderful event was “the demonstration of the Spirit.” This, he says, is what the prophet Joel foretold — the outpouring of the Spirit. For St. Paul, however, “the demonstration” is not to be found in wonders and marvels — “I had rather speak five words with my understanding than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.” The “demonstration” for him is revealed in the heightened *power* of the life. It is what St. Paul calls “a new creation,” the new fruits

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of the Spirit, which are "love, joy, peace, long suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control." These things are not spectacular or startling. They are not "psychic phenomena." But they are laboratory evidence of something spiritual, and not of something animal. There is "a new creation" within: "old things have passed away and, behold, all things are made new." It is "demonstration" of an ancestry unlike that which is found in the biological chain of descent. The thirteenth chapter of *First Corinthians* is St. Paul's supreme account of the "demonstration." He looks beyond the marvel of speaking with tongues, whether of men or angels, beyond wisdom and gnosis, beyond spectacular facts of endurance or of martyrdom, and picks out the simple, humble trait of love — a love that suffers long and is kind, that never fails, is never provoked, that endures all things and keeps right on loving — as the mark of the new creation, the demonstration of the Spirit.

There is as much evidence, in men's lives, of this higher aspect of love, as there is of the lower instinctive forces. There is as much evidence of an inward striving after God as Spirit within us, and that,

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too, a successful striving, as there is for what Doctor Freud and his disciples call *libido*, by which they mean a vast instinctive urge that colors, they believe, all thinking, wishing, striving, dreaming, all wit and humor, as well as all the deeper emotional springs of action. One looks on somewhat aghast as one watches this Austrian "psychologer" sweep all the life of man, literally from the cradle to the grave, into one inclusive drive and urge of *libido*.

There is no surer evidence for this wild surging of "wishes" down beyond the threshold of consciousness than there is for spiritual fellowship with a Beyond revealed within us. The idealizing tendency in us is as fundamental to our being and as ineradicable as any "Freudian wish." If we had all those "Freudian wishes" satisfied in one great glut and orgy of attainment, we should still be as far as ever from our goal of life as men. We should not yet have discovered *what it is we live by*. I suspect, with good reason, that there is a divine push — a Godward striving — a divine *urge* revealed in the microcosm that forms the central nucleus of my being. Freud's *libido* explains only a fraction of me, and a minor fraction at that. If Freud is right in thinking that this latter *drive* is due to ancestral inheritance, including the ape and tiger, perhaps I am right in believing that I have also a higher pedigree, and that I *partake* directly of that God who so

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mightily attracts me and draws me toward Himself. I cannot explain the whole of myself without bringing in God as part of my ancestry. And I do not look toward finding Him by going back in an infinite regress in time, but rather by going forward toward a Beyond within that forever draws me.

I find that I love the Good and hate evil. The more I try to explain this fact and the inward operations of my moral judgment by my biological ancestry, and the customs of the past, the more I am convinced that it cannot be done. Some of the facts can be explained that way. We do carry the biological past along with us, but again there is a nucleus of moral reality that demands another type of ancestry for its explanation. I can understand why we should be imperfect, and why we should have propensities for evil, if we have come up from a long line of historic development. But how does this account for my devotion to ideals of goodness and for my consecration to *what ought to be, but is not yet*? What is the origin of my love of truth and my passion for purity of heart and my readiness to give my life for a cause that ought to triumph? Somewhere along the line upward something has *emerged*, and is operating, that was not here before. In the face of obvious material conditions that surround us, we have persistent confidence in spiritual realities, just



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because we are inwardly allied to the Spirit that worketh in us.

The monumental evidence of God is, I believe, the fact of spiritual personality through which divine traits of character are revealed. Stars and mountains and ordered processes of nature reveal law and mathematics and beauty, but they reveal, and can reveal, no traits of character, no qualities of personality, no warmth and intimacy of Heart and Mind. If we are ever to be convinced that self-giving love is a reality of God's nature, we shall be convinced by seeing this love break through some human organ of His Spirit. The supreme revelation of the ages was not in the thunder and the fire of Sinai, but in the life of a person who was born of a woman, who increased in wisdom and stature, who was tempted as we are, who struggled and suffered, who battled for truth, who gave His life out of love for the rest of us, and who felt through it all that He was the organ of the Life and Love of God. Here on the highest level that has been reached since the race began, God as Spirit has broken through into visibility and has shown His true nature in life and action. But it is an unending revelation. Christianity,

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in the best sense of the words, is eternity revealed in time,

“The silence of eternity  
Interpreted by love.”

As the sap flows through the branches of the vine and vitalizes the whole organism, so that it bursts into the beauty and glory of foliage and blossom, and finally into fruit, so through the lives of men and women, inwardly responsive and joyously receptive, the life of God as Spirit flows, carrying vitality, awakening love, creating passion for goodness, kindling the fervor of consecration, and producing that living body, that organism of the Spirit, that “blessed community” which continues through the centuries the revelation of God as love and tenderness and eternal goodness.



**FACT AND FAITH**  
Francis J. McConnell



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**A**T first glance no ideas could be more sharply distinct from each other than fact and faith. Fact seems to be something self-evidently "out there" — objectively existing on its own account. Faith, on the other hand, seems to have to do with more subjective elements. Roughly speaking, the contrast is between the outside and the inside. Of course, moods of faith are themselves facts and can be studied as such; but, for the moment, we recognize the impression of objectivity which the word "fact" at first makes upon us, and that of subjectivity which "faith" makes.

We do not go far in our reflection upon the objectivity of fact, however, until troublesome questions come upon us. We cannot well doubt the impressions of otherness which the outside world of persons and things inevitably makes upon us, but we find ourselves puzzled and bewildered when we ask as to what the otherness at bottom is. The physicist tells us that the facts in sound and color are vibra-

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tions in the ether. If we could gaze on the vibrations themselves, to see what they look like in themselves, we should soon realize that they would have no "look" at all. Ether vibrations cannot be looked at in themselves — apart from the pictures which they produce upon our minds.

Now we cannot well carry our stripping process so far as to do away altogether with the objective world as existing independently of us. The logic of such stripping might be sound enough, but it would land us in practical absurdity. I once knew a college youth who persuaded himself that there was no world of persons or things outside of himself. When he heard that there is a formidable title for this view — namely, solipsism — he became "puffed up" with knowledge, as St. Paul would say, and in somewhat haughty fashion announced his philosophy to a distinguished teacher. The reply of that teacher grievously offended the youth as not being philosophical. The reply was: "If you are the only one in existence, why do you insist on unloading all this on me?" The answer was not strictly philosophical, perhaps. The student had reflected upon the elementary truth that every actual report of our outside world comes through the senses. We see, or hear, or smell, or taste, or touch something. The senses, however, may be — indeed often are — mistaken. Who has not fancied, at times, he saw or

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heard or felt something which he did not? If our senses ever deceive us, how can we be infallibly certain of them thereafter? Moreover, if the stimuli upon our nerves could be kept up, the outside world itself might fall away, without our ever suspecting the loss. The professor said nothing about all this — but his answer reveals the practical absurdity of solipsism.

All of which brings us to the element of assumption in our dealing with fact. In any knowing, we make at least three sets of assumptions: we assume that we live in a community of persons; that there is a common-to-all, of an objective kind, on the basis of which we deal with one another; and that the laws of reason with which we deal with one another and with the common-to-all can be trusted. Now all these assumptions are fundamentally acts of faith. I have no desire to enter into metaphysical discussion of the assumptions, but I do wish to mention the faith characteristic of the assumptions. If it is urged that the assumptions are taken without deliberation, or consciousness, this only makes the attitude of faith spontaneous. Indeed, we cannot help regarding the normal human attitude toward the world of men and things as one of faith. We accept things as they report themselves — taking them at face value till reason for doubt appears — and dealing with causes for doubt as these arise.

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Now, in the search for fact, in any and all realms, it is important for us to recognize the element of assumption and to keep the assumptions out in the full light. We enter upon any sphere of study with expectations and interests and moods that we cannot help trusting. They are part of us; and we have faith in them as we have faith in ourselves. There is no getting anywhere, even in the strictest scientific research, just by trying to treat the mind as a passive receiving instrument. Suppose an image of the outside world could be impressed upon an appropriate nervous tissue. Some agent would have to see the picture; and what that agent would see, would depend upon the agent. This is inescapable. William James used to say that the investigator who goes into a laboratory and merely stares about is a veritable "duffer." There must be interests and hopes; and the investigator lives in a scientific *milieu* which he has accepted as truly, in a matter of fact trustfulness as he has accepted the air that he has breathed.

Look for a moment at some of the subjective elements in fact finding in addition to those general assumptions mentioned above, without which thinking men never could get a start. First of all there is always a selective interest in any scrutiny of facts. If we were omniscient, we might see all facts in their mutual relationships; but since we are finite intelligences, we must make selection, and in those selections our interests count. To be sure, we hear it often



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said that it does not make considerable difference what bodies of facts are studied, so long as they are studied in the scientific manner. In so far as this means that all realms of possible knowledge ought to be explored to the utmost item, this is sound enough, but practically we have to treat some realms as more consequential for anybody and for everybody than are others. The best way, on the whole, is for each student to give himself to that which most interests him, but always on the watch against the overinfluence of the interests in determining what the facts shall be. We must remember that while a thinker without a true sense of perspective — a precision of focus — is lost as a truth seeker, nevertheless the perspective itself may prevent a view of all the facts, or all of a particular fact.

We hear today of two moods that influence thinking — the will to believe and the will not to believe. It is true that these moods are most often referred to in connection with philosophies of the universe; but they are important also in fields of fact search. Out of one we have the possibility of a credulity that sees facts where they are not, and out of the other a scientific skepticism that gets so far out of touch with reality that its conclusions are arid and barren. It is well to note, in passing, that the will not to believe — that is to say, of severe scientific skepticism — is not less subjective than the will to believe. Whenever a will element enters on one side or the other, we have

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to do with a confidence that is subjective. Skepticism is called for in high degree after facts have been announced, as the will to believe is necessary in the search for facts; but both types of will assertion are subjective enough to be themselves accountable to exact examination.

In the search of truth use is necessarily made of hypothesis. The seeker tries out hints and suggestions and theories, one after another. Discoveries do not just happen. Very few discoveries have been made by men looking for nothing in particular. The significant discoverers may not always have found what they were looking for, but they have been looking for something definite. The discovery of the New World by Columbus is significant in this context. Columbus did not sail westward with a general desire to see what he could find. The closer we come to an understanding of his life, the more we discern a vast body of theory, which Columbus had studied painstakingly and minutely, and out of which he had come to a definite expectation as to what he would find after a sail of just about so many miles. Now, this expectation was the dynamic force in the explorations of Columbus; but the expectation was

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mistaken in almost every detail. I mention this to suggest the element of faith in the finding of the most significant single material fact of modern times, and to admit the degree to which scrutiny of the discovery was subsequently necessary. It was nearly two centuries before the full geographical significance of the work of Columbus stood clear; and Columbus had no adequate glimpse of the meaning of what he had done.

May I mention the driving force a theory of the more philosophical order has had in shaping the search for facts? I refer to Hegelianism and its famous formula — thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. Hegel taught not merely that thought moves by the seizure of a position, the development of forces opposed to that position, and the final reconciliation of the contending forces in a consolidated new position, but also that objective reality moves according to the same formula. This formula was applied to many diverse realms, no two more diverse than the sphere of the study of Biblical documents and the investigation of social history, such as that carried through by Karl Marx. The fruitful study of New Testament history — which, by the way, developed methods of value for all examination of ancient documents — began with the Hegelian formula. By that formula dates were assigned to documents according as to whether they seemed to come out of a more Jewish

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tendency, a more Gentile tendency, or a tendency which resulted from the interplay of Judaism and Gentilism. The scheme of dates as thus arranged has long since, for the most part, passed away, but the formula put scholars on the path of an understanding of tendencies in the early Christian society which have, after the years, served as clues to a more exact statement of fact than would ever otherwise have been possible; and, as I said, the method has shown itself immensely productive in all historical study. It was faith in a formula, mistaken as it may in part have been, which led to general acceptance of a body of fact.

Karl Marx likewise took his start from Hegel. He saw in capitalism a stage of social development that must pass on into socialism. Marx seems to have been truer to the Hegelian formula than was Hegel himself, for Hegel appears to have allowed a full stop to the evolution called for by his theory, when he reached the Prussian state, which he considered practically ultimate. Marx taught that there could be no stop to the social movement, and that a capitalistic order must give way to socialism. The work of Marx has been most often considered from the point of view of prophecy. Some of the prophecies failed to come true, because of the effectiveness with which Marx made them. Men took heed and changed the course of some forces. I do not happen to be a socialist, and am not now concerned with the validity

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of Marx's proposals for a reorganized society. I am mentioning Marx for his work as a historian. Those who are qualified to speak say that Marx uncovered, or discovered, masses of economic fact that would hardly have been sought for at all if it had not been for faith in a theory. There was admittedly more in the researches of Marx than devotion to a theory of Hegelianism, but acceptance of a formula in good faith did, in the judgment of experts qualified to speak, lead to the discovery of facts.

I do not mean by this that a student gets hold of a theory, gives himself to it, and then fares forth to find facts in support of his proposition. That is done, of course, and must be done; but I am thinking now of the extent to which the reflection upon and confidence in the theory itself sharpens the eyes for the perception of facts. The evolutionary theory has been wonderfully fertile, not merely in sending men forth to find facts in support of the theory, but also in sharpening the eyes for the seeing of the facts. In a word, one of the best ways to see a fact is to accept a theory — and to push that theory out to its utmost. The history of human thinking seems to teach that on the whole the largest body of facts comes to light out of the passionate working of theories to the last ounce of their significance, rather than out of the resort to the judicial critical process too early.

It may seem that I mean to say that we arrive at

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that objective truth which we call fact by forcing processes, by so straining our theories that we see facts which are not there. I assume that this essay is entitled to assume that the faith referred to in the title applies to the fundamental attitudes toward the universe, but I have been insisting that the same spirit of faith must work in the pursuit of any and all knowledge beyond the mere commonplace of ordinary eyesight and finger touch. I am seeking for a line of approach to an attitude of faith toward the universe that shall keep us in touch with the attitude of faith in the search for objective knowledge anywhere. Permit me then to say that the pursuit of such knowledge by the strictest scientists calls for an absorption in the pursuit itself that takes the goal to be attained as an absorbing object which colors all the thought processes of the truth seeker. The seeking mind unfolds its activities in organic fashion. It becomes a soil in which a seed has been cast, and the soil handles the seed after its own nature, and the seed reveals its nature as the soil thus acts upon it.

Mr. Graham Wallas has recently written a most suggestive work on the "Art of Thought," in which the distinctive contribution is an exposition of what

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is called the period of incubation in thinking. Wallas points out that in the search for truth which has objective validity a first step is the collection of as large a body of relevant fact as possible, then the prolonged reflection upon this material. The reflection must be purposeful and strenuous, but must trust all the processes of the mind to do their part, waiting upon the organic activities of the life to act upon the thought material as soil acts upon seed, tearing the seed idea into shreds, steeping it in their juices, and finally ripening it into a new illumination that may burst upon the mind as if from an outside source.

It would be easy to find illustration of this incubation process and its results in the lives of outstanding thinkers. Poincaré, one of the most distinguished mathematicians of recent days, once said that in mathematical research he would first get a proposition clearly before his mind and then wait for a period for his mind itself to do what it would with the proposition. He would bring the idea up for repeated deliberate study, and then let it fall back again into what the psychologist would likely call the subconscious — whatever that is — expecting that finally the idea would pass through a ripening stage, out of which a new understanding might suddenly take shape. The significance of the story of Newton's quickly reaching out to a grasp of a unifying doctrine of gravitation, on the occasion of the falling of the apple — assuming the story to be true — is



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in the likelihood that the prolonged incubation of thought in Newton's mind came to sudden, swift realization of the direction to which that mind was pointing. We all recall that Darwin saw all his observations and reflections take shape in a statement about natural selection which came upon him as the result of his perusal of Malthus's book on population, or the conclusion of Malthus as to the relation between population and food supply. William James once spoke of some men as having the power to pull the trigger in the consciousness of their fellows. There is no use in pulling the trigger, unless the consciousness is already loaded with explosive material. This illustration does not speak in the organic terms of Wallas; but James means just what Wallas means.

This may seem to have in view the formulation of theory rather than the discovery of objective truth, but I am speaking of the search for the genuinely objective. When facts already known arrange themselves under prolonged and yet free reflection, they reveal their coherency with one another — they point to other facts which may be sought for — they show gaps between themselves which presumably can be filled. Evolution for a time had much to say about missing links. The only way biologists discovered that links were missing was by arranging the links at hand into proper order, or by allowing the links to arrange themselves together under the free play of the total mental forces. So, also, in the realm of



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historical research. Robertson, one of the most successful students of Spanish-American history in its beginnings, was at one time deeply concerned to find the correspondence which Cortez had sent from Mexico to the Emperor Charles V. After reflecting upon the events of the lives of Charles and Cortez till he was almost as familiar with their careers as if he had lived with them himself, he concluded that the correspondence must have been sent at about a given date, and that if it was sent at that date it must have reached Europe at a period when Charles was at Vienna, I think it was. At any rate, a search of the archives at the place suggested by Robertson revealed the sought for documents.

This is a most matter of fact illustration, to be sure, and not all the truth I am dealing with is thus matter of fact; but I do insist that the total activities of the mind do ripen convictions to the point where the impression of objectivity in our conclusions becomes practically inevitable, and practical certainty is all we need ask for. I insist, again and again, that this sinking our conceptions down into the depths of the incubating mental processes is an expression of faith.

There is a justification for emphasis on the faith aspect of our confident expectations, from the total

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activities of our minds in view of the tendency of much that has to do with psychology today to skepticism. To be sure, this skepticism, to date, limits itself chiefly to the great attitudes of faith toward the universe, but the implications of the skepticism touch all knowledge that lays claim to objectivity. A few confident psychologists have intimated that they are just putting their guns into position to demolish the objectivity of religious conceptions altogether. By all means let the attempt be made; but if the attack is carried through with any thoroughness, doubt will be cast on every form of objective knowledge, including that body of knowledge which we call psychology. Some of the criticism of philosophical and religious views that seek after objectivity derives from the contemplation of the psychological processes themselves. The process by which the mind moves to knowledge seems increasingly different from the content of the knowledge itself. The step over from a seeing act to the vision revealed in the act, is indeed a leap; but that leap is one which the psychologist must take, to establish the objectivity of psychology itself. The psychologist has no privileged position which gives him immunity from the skepticism that he himself proclaims.

The psychologist of these latest days, however, speaks in terms of projection upon the universe of views which we cast out from us for defense from

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the universe, or for attack on the universe, or for adjustment to the universe. The result is skeptical, but the skepticism cannot stop with the more general views of the universe. It must include the objectivity of psychology itself. What is the complex out of which modern psychology arises? Psychologists are human beings, and make their projections upon the universe like the rest of us. This is only to say that while we must establish tests of objectivity — to which I shall refer later — if we get too wholesome in our attacks on objectivity, we raise a question as to the validity of our own bases of attack. There must be a compelling faith, rather than a predominant skepticism. Now, it seems fair to say that the Graham Wallas emphasis on incubation is more soundly the method of faith. An outstanding and perennial instance of human faith is confidence in organic processes — and faith in the workings of men's minds is just that.

A working of a further force in the search for truth, which, if not faith outright, is something much akin to it, is the social atmosphere in which the seeker for truth lives and labors; and this force must be reckoned with. It is measurably true of truth

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seekers, as of all other leaders, that they are in a degree voices of their times. We must guard against the absurdity of maintaining that a scientist is to the same extent a voice of his times as a poet may be, or a statesman. We could hardly say that the calculus or co-ordinate geometry comes out of an age uttering itself; but nevertheless the announcements even of mathematical genius would be impossible, except after the general mathematical understanding, or at least interest, has risen to a considerable level. It has been noted that the propositions which Euclid gathered up for the after ages, took shape — many of them — at the periods when the interest of the Greeks in geometry was so keen that geometry was discussed in the streets and in the market place, and when men thought that the properties of number and space were likely to introduce them to the profoundest secrets of the universe.

I have in mind further the development of bodies of truth seekers — scientific or otherwise — whose very existence as organized groups creates a social temper, or atmosphere, in which discernment becomes keener. It is sometimes said that atmosphere distorts vision — that it leads to loss of focus and perspective. It is conceivable that an atmosphere, however, might become unusually clear, or that it might itself take on a lens-like quality that would bring far things near. Science is a co-operative

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activity not merely in that labor is divided among scientists and that each strives to produce something that will contribute to the total of knowledge, but also in that there is a spirit of knowledge that informs the members of a scientific group, and which makes each member of the group more accurate and more powerful than he would be if acting by himself. There is in such groups an expectancy, a feeling of the imminency of discovery, which removes the dullness from understanding. Of course, such tempers and spirits are not safe without careful judgment; but the driving force is the expectancy. Scientific discovery cannot get far without scientific imagination; and imagination cannot rightfully be classed among the cooler powers of the mind. We more commonly talk of imagination as something that is capable of becoming heated.

That there is danger in this social atmosphere, as aiding the search for truth, cannot be questioned. There have been times when general expectations as to the discovery of this or that desired object has prevented the scientific search for the object. We must often remind ourselves that there are intellectual fashions in the realm of truth pursuit, which, like fashions elsewhere, come and go. There is an element of the irrational in fashions, always, and this is true of science as well as of hats or coats; but the fashion adds interest to hats and coats, and the

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fashion adds zest to a pursuit of truth — makes it interesting. I am not sure but that the self abandonment of a student to the scientific spirit of a time helps make the most of that spirit. In any event, we are here moving in the realm of faith, like the faith of trusting to a sea wind or to a current that carries us whither it wills.

Out of all this comes the character whom we call the expert, whose authority in his own field we willingly accept by faith. An age of scientific procedure is often characterized as such because of its use of instruments of precision; and such instruments are indeed marvels. The confidence of the American people especially, in tools of exact fitness to do the work for which they are intended, is so complete that there is among us almost a worship of instrumentalism. We are often in danger of thinking that our instruments are more material than they are, forgetting that the intellectual aspect of an instrument is the most significant. A table of logarithms is one of the most effective time saving devices ever contrived, and yet the table involves as material only the paper on which it is printed.

More remarkable than the tools of the expert is

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the expert himself. It has been said that, after all, tools are only extensions of human powers — that a telescope or microscope is only another lens added to the natural lens of the eye. That being so, all depends on the mind back of both the natural and the artificial lens. Here we depend upon qualities in the expert which are more than specifically intellectual. They are ethical. Professor Hocking has told us of the significance of the fact that at sea the sharpest eye can see for the whole ship. If the sharp eye is thus to see, it must look with a sense of responsibility, for all the crew and the passengers are dependent upon the eyesight. We make much today of our advances in scientific physical invention, without enough consideration of the danger of these inventions except in responsible hands, but at bottom we all concede that one vast element in a modern democracy is faith in the character of experts. The expertness of the expert is more astonishing the longer we contemplate it. It cannot be accurately described. It is a feeling of awareness of the presence of significant facts that are outside of the mind of the expert himself. Expertness has never been more vividly described than in a New Testament passage telling of the shipwreck of St. Paul. The Book of Acts says that in the darkness of the night of the storm the sailors sensed that they drew nigh to land, and when they cast the sounding lines they found it

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to be so. Thus it is with the expert. Out of the long experience he senses facts that other men would never know till they were violently cast against them.

It is high time that we ask as to the tests of objectivity to which even the most expert must bring their conclusions. Of course, if results can be tested by physical means, the problem is quickly solved. We can look and see — or we can use a microscope, or a test tube, or some other laboratory tool. There are, however, many, many realms of knowledge that we hold to be objectively real, which we cannot bring to such obvious judgment. The pragmatist tells us the mark of the objective validity of a conception is that it will work, and too often he seems to suggest that “working” means something that we can actually detect in the world around us; but “working” will have to mean something more than that. An idea may be usable without being objectively valid. The older notion of the atom, for example, did not claim objective validity in the statements of those who understood what they were about. It was an arbitrary stopping point in the process of dividing matter, established for the sake of the discoveries we might make in the search for general laws that would be



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valid, and which did not depend for their validity upon the inner structure of the atom. The atom was a fiction, but did not deceive anybody who had his eyes open. It was not intended to deceive, and helped to lead to truth. As soon as we should attempt to take the atom itself as objectively real — I mean the old fashioned "lump" atom — we should confront inconsistencies that would make it impossible to hold it as truth, without scandal to reason. Some laws of thought must be accepted as controlling reality. Or consider the practical worth of the old Ptolemaic theory in astronomy. This theory "worked" for a thousand years, and measurably well accounted for all the facts. It is not held as valid anywhere today. Why? Because another explanation has been found that accounts for all the facts, and accounts for them with more logical consistency, and with more simplicity. Here again we confront subjectivity, for consistency and simplicity have to do with inner spiritual demands.

The scientific thinker provides for objectivity by bringing the conceptions to the test of the judgment of the expert's peers. Not only, then, are facts discovered through social expectancies and demands, but they must also be judged by social pronouncements, taking "social" as referring to the society of the scientific groups. Here is manifested trust, both in the expert's reasonings and in those of the ex-

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pert's associates and peers. Always, however, we have to be on our guard, for every now and again some expert has a long fight to convince his co-workers as to the validity of his findings. Think of the struggles of Pasteur to convince, not the popular mind, for the popular mind had neither lot nor part in the matter, but the scientific mind of the time. We cannot always be sure of a common-to-all agreement reached by a group. The truth may reside in the special to one. Still, in the long run the favorable vote of those qualified to pass upon the announcements of the expert must be taken as a title to objectivity. There are some who maintain that the crowning test of the objectivity of an idea is the control it gives over material forces, a control leading to further mastery of those forces or to further understanding of the discovered facts themselves. This would appear open to question, for a set of facts might come to a limit in its leading to control of forces or to understanding. Its significance might be exhausted without loss of objectivity.

I have gone far enough in the discussion of the faith that leads to seizure of fact. We arrive at the realization that faith itself is one of the outstanding facts within our knowledge. In the opening sentences of this paper I spoke of facts, as ordinarily conceived of, as the material things we see around us.

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Now it appears that faith itself is a fact which we must all take account of.

My aim has been to draw out the significance of this faith. It underlies all thinking whatsoever. I have no desire to refer to what may be called philosophical or religious faith, as against scientific faith. I am content simply to say that the scientific thinkers cannot claim a monopoly of an objectivity of method. True, they can bring many of their results to tests of a physical order, as thinkers on the problems of the universe as a whole cannot. Still, thinking in any realm rests upon assumptions accepted by faith, and moves in company with faith at every step. Physical tests apart, the thinker on the problems of the universe and of ultimate reality must be expected to meet the same standards of reason and of sanction by others working in his field, that the physical scientist meets; and his lack of facilities for bringing his conclusions to physical tests may possibly be offset by his possession of better equipment for the estimate of the value of the physical facts than that of the specialized worker with those facts himself.

Philosophical religious reflection upon the nature of ultimate reality is profoundly concerned with the

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friendliness of the universe to man. Faith, as considered in this essay, is partly faith in the friendliness of the universe. The physical scientist assumes such friendliness when he acts on the belief that principles which he establishes in his laboratory hold good everywhere. Even when a John Stuart Mill says that two and two may make five somewhere else, he puts the possibility far away. The pervasiveness of faith through all thinking warrants the assumption of a fundamental hospitality of the universe to the inquiries of men; and in this assumption the man of religious faith finds an essential base for the movement of humanity out toward an intimacy with the ultimate reality of the universe, which leads to enlargement and betterment of humanity itself.

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